Summer (1977-78)
Volume 23 no 3 (104)
£2.50 $5.00

SURVEY

a journal of East & West studies

Soviet Satire

Alexander Zinoviev
Michael Heller
Victor Nekrasov
Eberhard Reissner

Totalitarianism Reconsidered

Maurice Cranston
George Urban
Raymond Aron
Domenico Settembrini

Stalin in Retrospect

Boris Souvarine
Leopold Labedz

Marxism

Leszek Kolakowski

Communism and Israel

Leonard Schapiro
Alain Greilsammer

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Editor: Leopold Labedz

International Advisory Board

Enzo Bettiza ..... *Il Giornale, Milan*
François Bourricaud ..... *University of Paris*
Alan Bullock ..... *University of Oxford*
Luciano Cafagna ..... *University of Pisa*
Maurice Cranston ..... *European University Institute, Florence*
Melvin Croan ..... *University of Wisconsin*
Colin Crouch ..... *London School of Economics & Political Science*
François Duchêne ..... *University of Sussex*
Giorgio Galli ..... *Critica Sociale, Milan*
Pierre Hassner ..... *Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris*
Masamichi Inoki ..... *Kyoto University*
James Joll ..... *London School of Economics & Political Science*
Karl Kaiser ..... *University of Cologne*
Ivo Lederer ..... *New York*
John Wilson Lewis ..... *Stanford University*
Richard Löwenthal ..... *Free University of Berlin*
Alasdair MacIntyre ..... *Boston University*
Donald MacRae ..... *London School of Economics & Political Science*
Mark Mancall ..... *Stanford University*
Ali Mazrui ..... *University of Michigan*
Ian Nish ..... *London School of Economics & Political Science*
Leonard Schapiro ..... *London School of Economics & Political Science*
Soedjatmoko ..... *Djakarta, Indonesia*
Theo Sommer ..... *Die Zeit, Hamburg*
Leonard Sussman ..... *Freedom House, New York*

Editorial Assistant

Susan MacRae

Editorial Office

Ilford House, 133 Oxford Street, London W1R 1TD (Tel. 01-734 0592)

Subscription Office

Oxford University Press, Subscription Department, Press Road, Neasden, London NW10 0DD (Tel. 01-450 8080)

Subscription Rates

£10 or US $20.00. Single copies £2.50 or US $5.00.

Vol. 24: UK £12; US $24; Elsewhere £13. Single copies £3.25 or US $6.50. Special arrangements for airmail.

Manuscripts

Articles should be submitted in duplicate to the editorial office. They should be typed in double-spacing and, preferably, conform to the house style of *Survey*.

Copyright © *Survey* 1978 ISSN 0039-6192

Survey is published under the auspices of the London School of Economics & Political Science by

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Produced in cooperation with Freedom House (New York)

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ilford House
133 Oxford Street
London, W1R 1TD
tel: 01-734 0592

SURVEY
a journal of East & West studies
published by Oxford University Press

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Beginning with the Winter 1977-78 issue (Vol. 23, No. 102), *Survey* will be published under the auspices of the London School of Economics and Political Science (University of London). Members of the L.S.E. Centre on International Relations and other professors from the L.S.E. are joining their colleagues who are already on the *Survey* International Advisory Board. At the same time Freedom House in New York will assist in the production of the journal, which will continue to be distributed by Oxford University Press. We are grateful to all concerned.

The first two issues of Vol. 23 (Nos. 102 and 103) will be devoted (as was No. 52 in 1954) to Soviet science and technology. In the main they are based on contributions to the Workshop on that theme which was supported by the National Science Foundation, Washington, and organized by J. R. Thomas, the Soviet Programme Director at the National Science Foundation. The opinions of the individual authors are their own and do not reflect the views of the National Science Foundation or of the U.S. government. In addition, some *samizdat* material is included in No. 103 to illustrate Soviet dissident scientists' perceptions of problems relevant to the subjects discussed.

In the future, the quarterly issues of *Survey* will continue to deal with ideas and international affairs in the overall framework of East-West relations. To new subscribers the subscription rate for Vol. 23 (1977-78) is £10 (or U.S.$20). It includes postage for the four issues. Orders should be accompanied by the correct remittance and addressed to:

Oxford University Press Journals,
Press Road,
Neasden,
London NW10 0DD.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ilford House
133 Oxford Street
London, W1R 1TD
tel: 01-734 0592

SURVEY
a journal of East & West studies
published by Oxford University Press

IMPORTANT NOTICE

SURVEY Volume 23, 1977-78

As subscribers will know, no issues of *Survey* were published in 1977. *Survey*, Vol. 23, will now be published in four issues during 1978 and will be called the 1977-78 volume. The sequence of volumes during the years 1976-79 will thus be:

Volume 22 1976

Volume 23 1977-78

Volume 24 1979

Subscribers who have paid for Vol. 23 will receive the four issues before the end of 1978, and subscribers to Vol. 24 will receive its issues during 1979.

Survey Magazine Ltd. have instructed their distributors, Oxford University Press, to supply Vol. 23 (1977-78) and Vol. 24 (1979) at the subscription rates already paid, and apologise for the delay in publishing the four Vol. 23 issues previously announced for 1977.

Subscribers to Vol. 23 (1977-78) who have not yet renewed for Vol. 24 (1979) and subscribers to Vol. 24 who have not yet renewed for Vol. 25 (1980) should wait for appropriate renewal invoices.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Summer (1977–78)
Volume 23
no 3 (104)

SURVEY

a journal of East & West studies

Soviet Satire

Departure and Arrival ... ... *Alexander Zinoviev* 1
Autobiography ... ... " 1
The Soviet Swift ... ... *Michael Heller* 11
The Yawning Heights ... ... *Alexander Zinoviev* 20
The Radiant Future ... ... " 35
Being Earnest Isn't Always Important ... *Victor Nekrasov* 42
Contemporary Russian Satire ... ... *Eberhard Reissner* 52

Totalitarianism

Should We Cease to Speak of Totalitarianism? *Maurice Cranston* 62
Constitutional Totalitarianism ... ... *Patrick O'Brien* 70
Ideology and Totalitarianism ... ... *Raymond Aron* 81
Mussolini and Lenin ... ... *George Urban and Domenico Settembrini* 87

Homage to Boris Souvarine

The Fate of a Book ... ... *Boris Souvarine* 118
Stalin: How and Why ... ... " 120
The Real Stalin ... ... *Leonard Schapiro* 131
Stalin and History: Perspectives in Retrospect *Leopold Labedz* 134
Deutscher as Historian and Prophet II ... " 146

Marxism

Marxism—A Summing-Up ... ... *Leszek Kolakowski* 165

Communism and Israel

Communism in Israel: 13 Years after the Split *Alain Greilsammer* 172
The Soviet Union and the PLO ... ... *Leonard Schapiro* 193

East Germany

Critical Voices ... ... *Werner Volkmer* 208

Obituary: Ignazio Silone 218

Our Contributors 219

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Minerva

A REVIEW OF SCIENCE, LEARNING AND POLICY

Editor: Edward Shils

VOLUME XVI NUMBER 1 **SPRING 1978**

COMMENT

The Obligations of Citizenship in the Republic of Science *Alvin M. Weinberg*

ARTICLES

Solidarity within the Republic of Science *John Ziman*

The Rockefeller Foundaton and the Development of Scientific Medicine in Great Britain *Donald Fisher*

On Freedom and Planning in Science: The Society for Freedom in Science, 1940–46 *William McGucken*

The French Academy of Sciences in the Nineteenth Century *Maurice Crosland*

REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

Report on the German Universities

A Comment by the Chairman of the German Universities Commission *John Passmore*

A Further Comment *Charles Frankel*

BOOK REVIEWS

Reviews by *Robert A. McCaughey, Keith Pavitt*

Annual subscription: £8.00/$18.00
Single copy: £2.50/$5.00

MINERVA, 59 ST. MARTIN'S LANE, LONDON WC2N 4JS

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

From Yawning Heights to Radiant Future

WE publish below a special section on and by the remarkable Soviet philosopher and logician, writer and satirist, Alexander Zinoviev. He has recently been allowed to leave the Soviet Union and arrived in the West on 6 August 1978. At our request he immediately sent Survey *an introductory note for this section.*

Departure and Arrival

WHEN, as a young man, I used to wander round Moscow, hungry and alone, and waiting for arrest to relieve me from my misery, I would dream of becoming a writer and telling the truth about the society which was taking shape inexorably before my very eyes. Since then almost 40 years have gone by. I have written books in which I have set forth what seems to me to be the truth about our life. For doing that I got off relatively lightly: I found myself in the West, and not at hard labour in a prison camp, which is what I had been expecting. What more could one want?—Life's aim achieved. Simply enjoy the delights of Western civilization! But I don't want to look at beautiful cities, eat tasty dishes, or take advantage of democratic freedoms. I feel nostalgic, because my heart is still there, in my ugly but native Moscow. The point is not so much that I have lived my life and left my roots there; it is rather that, as that terrible new society grew, it was linked, however tenuously, with my own heart; it was mine and it remains mine, whatever happens. That monster is my child too.

Munich, August 1978. **Alexander Zinoviev**

Autobiography

Alexander Zinoviev

I WAS born on 29 October 1922 in the village of Pakhtino, Chukhloma district, Kostroma *oblast*. My mother, Appolinaria Vasilievna Zinovieva (1891–1969) was a peasant, a collective farm worker. My father, Alexander Yakovlevich Zinoviev (1888–1964) was a worker, a house-painter. There were 11 children in our family. Two died in childhood, two in adult life (my sister at 19, my brother at 56). I have two remaining sisters (Praskovya and Anna, both workers, now retired on pensions) and four brothers (three of whom, Nikolai, Alexei and Vladimir

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are workers who later became engineers; the fourth, Vasiliy is a retired officer and colonel). In accordance with local tradition our family lived partly in the country (my mother and the younger children) and partly in Moscow (my father and the elder children). In 1946 the whole family moved to Moscow. We lived in a damp basement room measuring 10 square metres and there were always at least eight or 10 people in it.

From 1933 onwards I lived and studied in Moscow. In 1939 I finished school and entered the Faculty of Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy, Literature and History. In the same year I was expelled from the *Komsomol* and the Institute for speaking out against the Stalin cult. First I was sent to a psychiatric clinic, but after the clinic had pronounced me mentally normal I was taken to the KGB (or whatever the organization was called at the time) building on the Lubyanka. All I remember is that I was interrogated several times over in an effort to discover who had taught me to think such thoughts. After a short time I was released. This was done in the hope of identifying my connections and "confederates." However, I did not go home; instead I went straight to my mother in the country. Since, immediately before my arrest, I had told the friends who had denounced me that I would run away to Siberia, [the authorities] spent six months searching for me out there. I learned this several years later from some former schoolmates. Finally the authorities had the sense to start looking in the country round about my home village. When I learned that they were on my trail I fled again, this time to Moscow. In my village I had been working on a collective farm. Although I had had my military service deferred, I now persuaded them to issue me with my call-up papers all the same. In this way I escaped both the security organs and starvation.

In my military service I served in the cavalry, tank forces and the airforce. I began the war in the ground forces and ended it in the air. I was a pilot and as such took part in several dozen missions raiding targets in the enemy rear. For my record in battle I was decorated and awarded medals. I was demobilized in 1946.

After the army I entered the Philosophy Faculty at Moscow University. In 1951 I graduated and embarked on postgraduate study which I completed in 1954, presenting a thesis on "A Method of Progression from the Abstract to the Concrete (on the basis of Marx's *Das Kapital*)." The thesis was an unofficial *succès de scandale.* Four years later, the Higher Examination Board still refused to grant me the degree of Candidate of Sciences. It is said that my thesis is still circulating even now in *samizdat.* At all events, many Soviet philosophers have borrowed widely from it, although so unintelligently that the basic ideas have remained virtually untouched or distorted. While studying I also worked as loader, navvy, laboratory assistant, translator and schoolteacher. I taught logic from 1948 to 1954.

In 1954 I was given a post at the Academy of Sciences' Institute of Philosophy, where I remained in regular and continuous employment right up to my dismissal in January 1977, i.e. for over 22 years. I was

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

first a technical assistant, then a junior research officer and finally a senior research officer. I held a combined post first in the Physico-Technical Institute, later in the University Philosophy Faculty. In the University I was a senior lecturer and then (from 1962–76) a professor. At one time (1967–68) I was head of the department of logic. In 1962 I defended my doctoral thesis. In 1966 I was awarded a professorship. From 1968 to 1970 I was on the editorial board of the journal *Voprosy filosofii* (Questions of Philosophy). In 1974 I was elected a member of the Finnish Academy of Sciences.

Family

I married my first wife in 1943 and we had a son Valeriy (born 1944) who is now a police officer. I was divorced in 1948. I remarried in 1951 and my second wife gave me a daughter Tamara (born 1954) who is a graduate in Art History from Moscow University but a painter by vocation. I married for a third time in 1967. My third wife, Olga Mironovna, born 1945, is a Moscow University graduate in the history of philosophy. We have a daughter Polina (born 1971).

Party Membership

From my youth I was an anti-Stalinist and right up to the death of Stalin I regarded anti-Stalinist propaganda as my main life's work. It was for speaking out against the Stalin cult that I was expelled from the *Komsomol* and rewarded with the attention of the security organs, as I have already mentioned. After Stalin's death I joined the Soviet Communist Party with the intention of continuing my fight against Stalinism legally. Soon, however, I realized that the Stalinists themselves had taken this matter into their own hands and I was out of business. Thereafter I remained in the Party purely for form's sake—which is fairly typical among the Soviet intelligentsia. I paid my dues and drew cartoons for the wall newspaper. Sometimes I sat in at meetings, again drawing cartoons or reading detective novels. In June 1976 I left the Party in connection with the "Finnish incident" which I shall describe later—I stopped paying my dues and returned my membership card. I was formally expelled from the Party in November or December 1976.

Scientific Work

I did not begin to publish until fairly late on—in 1958. Furthermore, my first articles were published in Poland, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere in the West (I have forgotten exactly where). In 1958 I destroyed my book about Marx's *Das Kapital* on which I had spent eight years working, since I had obtained a purely negative result and was now convinced that it was an impossible and hopeless line of investigation. In 1959 I started working in the field of mathematical logic and the logical methodology of science ("the logic of science"). I have had six books

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and over 100 articles published in Russian as well as several books and a great many articles in other languages. The main sphere of my professional interest is non-classical logic and its applications in the analysis of the language of science. On many occasions I have been invited to attend international professional gatherings, been included in delegations to congresses, received private invitations and so on, but I have not once been allowed out of the Soviet Union. Invitations have come from Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, the USA, Belgium, Holland, Finland, West Germany and elsewhere.

Main Scientific Works

1. *Philosophical Problems of Polyvalent Logic*, Moscow, 1960.
2. *The Logic of Statements and the Theory of Deduction*, Moscow, 1962.
3. *Philosophical Problems of Polyvalent Logic*, Dordrecht, Holland, 1963.
4. *Foundations of the Logical Theory of Scientific Knowledge*, Moscow, 1967.
5. *Über Mehrwertige Logik*, Berlin, Braunschweig, Basel, 1968.
6. *Complex Logic*, Moscow, 1970.
7. *Komplexe Logik*, Berlin, Braunschweig, Basel, 1970.
8. *The Logic of Science*, Moscow, 1971.
9. *Logical Physics*, Moscow, 1972.
10. "The Non-traditional Theory of Quantifiers. The Logic of Classes" in *Teoriya logicheskogo vyvoda*, Moscow, 1973.
11. "Some Systems of Formal Arithmetic" in *Reports on Mathematical Logic*, No. 3, 1974.
12. "An Outline of Empirical Geometry" in *Filosofskie nauki*, No. 1, 1975.
13. "Parallel Lines in Empirical Geometry" in *Filosofskie nauki*, No. 4, 1975.
14. *Logische Sprachregeln*, Berlin, Munich, Salzburg, 1975. With H. Wessel.
15. *Logik und Sprache der Physik*, Berlin, 1975.
16. "Logic and Empirical Sciences" in *Studia Logica*, XXXV, No. 1, 1976. With H. Wessel.
17. *Foundations of the Logical Theory of Scientific Knowledge*, Dordrecht, 1973.
18. *Complete Induction and Fermat's Last Theorem*, 1975. Not yet published.
19. *Logical Physics*, 1976. Not yet published.
20. *Systemic Method*, 1974. Not yet published.

My Position in Soviet Science

From the very outset my position was ambiguous. On the one hand they encouraged me after a fashion. On the other, they overtly suppressed

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

me. They allowed me to defend a candidate's thesis but for many years they would not officially grant me the degree. They praised my originality but refused to publish me for many years and banned any reference to my thesis. Then they allowed me to appear in print but did everything they could to hush me up. They borrowed a great deal from me but never quoted their source. They included my name in delegations to international gatherings but never let me out to attend them. They nominated me as a Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences but did not elect me. They nominated me for a State Prize but did not award me one. In 1968 they made me a member of the editorial board of the journal *Voprosy filosofii* but soon they stopped printing my articles in that journal and I left the board in 1970. In 1967 they appointed me head of the department of logic in the Philosophy Faculty but soon they relieved me of that office (with the aim of "strengthening the department's leadership"). Moreover, my logician colleagues assisted their efforts by giving preference to somone they themselves despised both professionally and as an individual. I was regularly invited to give lectures at the University but at the same time they gradually closed down the courses I had introduced and took away my diploma students and research students. Things dragged on in this fashion all through the 1960s. If I did achieve any success during that time it was thanks to the leniencies of the "liberal" period and because my works were being published in the West and foreign logicians and philosophers were showing an interest in me. The 1970s saw the start of a campaign among my colleagues to discredit me as a scholar which ended in the total dissolution of my group, the banning of my works from publication and the prohibition of all references to my works. My activities at the University were reduced to an insignificant course of lectures (about 20 hours)—and not even for specialists in logic. In 1974 neither I nor any of my students were even admitted to an international symposium on logic held in the Academy of Sciences' Institute of Philosophy where I worked. Nor was I allowed to attend the All-Union symposium on logic in Kiev in 1975. In 1974 the journal *Filosofskie nauki* published articles which said that none of my scientific work had any scientific value. Many Soviet logicians and philosophers contributed to the preparation of these articles and they had been approved by the science department of the CPSU. Their publication could in no way be viewed as pure chance. The journal's editorial board refused to publish any articles in my defence, even though there were quite a number of them. So, long before the appearance of *The Yawning Heights* (towards the end of 1973) I was already in a situation of total creative isolation.

The Writing of "The Yawning Heights"

As the saying goes, every cloud has a silver lining. Prevented from doing any active work in the field of logic, I found myself for the

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

first time for many years with free time at my disposal. I embarked on the writing of *The Yawning Heights*. However, the book was no casual venture for me. In my young days I had devoted quite a lot of time to literary activity—poems, caricatures and satirical sketches in wall newspapers, story-telling, "playing around." After the army I thought about becoming a writer but decided that such an enterprise would be foolish at that time. I went on as before writing for the wall newspaper, contributing to the composition of anecdotes and jokes and practising oral storytelling. All the time I was dreaming of writing a full-scale book. I did write a thing or two, and I did publish one or two things. I gave dozens of public lectures, many of which I later incorporated almost word for word in *The Yawning Heights*. I continually indulged in literary digressions in my lectures on logic. Nor did my experience of writing books and articles on logic and philosophy go to waste. In short, I was perfectly well prepared for writing *The Yawning Heights*. The book was practically "written" already in my head and all I had to do was get it down on paper. This I did in six months from start to finish. Admittedly, I worked in a frenzied "high." Sometimes I wrote for 20 hours non-stop. Only my wife Olga (who—and I must stress this—was my only help with the writing) and a few close friends, whose identity I cannot reveal as yet, knew about my work on the book. It is entirely due to them that the book came out at all. Any claims by other persons to have assisted with the book's writing or arranged for its publication I categorically reject as, at the very least, immodest. I hope in time to be able to name those people without whose help the book would not have been published. When I started working on the book I was imprudent enough to read some bits to certain of my acquaintances. This at once put the appropriate organs on guard and I later could sense that they had me under observation all the time. Consequently I was obliged to keep the book a total secret. And I succeeded. As a cover for my activity I simultaneously wrote a book on logic which was published in German in Berlin in 1975. *The Yawning Heights* was written with scarcely any corrections or editorial revision. Reading it through after publication I noted to my amazement that there were not all that many corrections or improvements that I could have made even then. After completing the book I knew nothing definite about what had become of it right up until publication. In my heart of hearts I had not expected the book to come out so soon. The most I hoped for was that it would not be lost entirely but would be printed after a certain lapse of time, if only in a small edition. The last thing I could have foreseen was the success that lay in store for it.

The Finnish Incident

In June 1976 I was to travel to an international symposium on logic in Finland. For me the trip was a matter of principle and I had notified the appropriate organs of my intentions in advance through "intermedi-

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aries." I was a member of the Finnish Academy of Sciences and a delegation member; I had obtained an important result in logic (using my own theory of indemonstrability I had demonstrated in 1975 that it was impossible to find a proof of Fermat's Last Theorem). Furthermore, I had been refused permission to travel abroad dozens of times and I was "tired" of being in the position of a serf or slave of the state. On this occasion too, as always, permission was refused. I made a public protest about it through a Western correspondent. I must point out that *The Yawning Heights* had not been published at the time and I had no idea as yet what stage matters had reached regarding the book. Therefore the "Finnish incident" could not be linked with *The Yawning Heights*. For making my protest I was immediately fired from Moscow University and expelled from the Soviet Philosophical Society (of which I was not in fact a member!). My works were taken out of print and references to them, which had previously not been encouraged, were now banned entirely. The KGB set up what amounted virtually to open surveillance of myself and my family.

After the Publication of "The Yawning Heights"

News of the publication of *The Yawning Heights* broke at the end of September 1976. What happened next? My colleagues, fellow-employees and old acquaintances declared a total boycott of me and my family. My graduate student Anastasia Fedina was forbidden to defend her candidate's thesis on logic since she refused to change to another supervisor and to break off contact with my family. Then the atmosphere in the logic section was made intolerable for her and she had to leave. All opportunities for working in the field of logic were barred to her and at the beginning of 1978 she found herself deprived of employment altogether as the result of a disgusting charade. She was offered a job in the *Nauka* publishing house. She applied, was accepted and handed in her notice at the Institute of Philosophy. The moment she did so it turned out that the publishing offer was a complete fiction designed to get her out of the Institute. I would like to draw the attention of philosophers and logicians in the West to the fact that this mean trick against Anastasia Fedina was played by her philosopher and logician colleagues. Her situation gives cause for considerable disquiet.

My brother Vasiliy was discharged from the army and sent away from Moscow. He had earlier served in various parts of the country and is a colonel and a lawyer. In our entire adult life we have not seen each other more than a few times. He had not the least idea about the book's existence. In 1976 he was transferred from Kiev to a job in Moscow in the military procuracy. The moment my book came out he was discharged from the army. I suspect that one of the motives for his discharge was to remove him from Moscow and thus deprive me of a legal defence. The basic motive, of course, was revenge for what I had done.

Vasiliy's daughter, a minor, was also sacked from her job, and they

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were obliged to leave Moscow. Even now pressure is still being put on him for his "disreputable connexions."

My other brothers have continually had pressure exerted on them and it is still going on. The son of one brother was put through an illegal interrogation by a KGB psychiatrist and dismissed from his job. He is still unemployed today. Two other brothers have been prevented from improving their accommodation. All have been threatened with dismissal from their jobs if I leave the Soviet Union.

At a Party meeting on 2 December 1976 at the Institute of Philosophy my colleagues unanimously condemned *The Yawning Heights* as an anti-Soviet lampoon although none of them had ever so much as set eyes on the book. The meeting took a decision to recommend the Institute's board of directors to sack me and to lodge a petition seeking to have me stripped of all my academic degrees and titles and all government awards (including my war decorations). The very next day I was fired. However, since this was a glaring breach of the law and since it provoked a strong reaction in the West, I was promptly reinstated. They decided to act "lawfully." They arranged for my post to be thrown open. But this too was a violation of the law, since no official announcement of the vacancy was made. As things stood in the Institute, literally dozens of staff members were long since due for re-election. A meeting of the logic section was held at which all my scientific work was assessed as gibberish. And this was said by people who not so long ago had been recommending my book for translation into English and nominating me for a state award as one of the country's leading scholars. Interestingly, although I had not yet been fired, the logic section had already recommended another person to fill my "vacant" place. In accordance with the recommendation, the Academic Council failed to re-elect me to my post for a new term. By doing so they were incidentally in breach of numerous paragraphs of the corresponding regulations. I was not invited to attend the meeting although I was a member of the Academic Council and it was my fate that was being decided. There was no discussion of my scientific work. Furthermore, they forgot that they themselves had many times presented me with institute prizes for my books, recommended me for awards, nominated me for a state prize, etc. No other alternative work was offered to me. The trade union organization showed no concern despite its obligation to take steps in view of the violations of labour legislation that had been perpetrated. So, in January 1977 I was sacked for the second time from the Institute of Philosophy where I had (by general consensus) been an exemplary member of staff for over 22 years.

On 4 February 1977, at the request of the Institute of Philosophy, the Higher Examination Board attached to the USSR Council of Ministers stripped me of all my degrees and titles. What is more, the Institute had only requested that I be stripped of my degrees of candidate and doctor of sciences, but the Higher Examination Board deprived me additionally of my titles of senior research officer and professor.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In fact the Board had no right to strip me of the title of senior research officer; that is the exclusive right of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences. The Institute of Philosophy, for its part, had no power to request the withdrawal of my degree of Candidate of Sciences inasmuch as I had been awarded that degree in the University Philosophy Faculty. These are only some examples of the utterly lawless treatment I and my immediate associates have received since the publication of *The Yawning Heights*. Shortly afterwards the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet stripped me of all my state awards. In February 1977 the telephone in my apartment was cut off. It has been made impossible for my wife and me to have any telephone contact or correspondence with friends and relatives abroad. One close friend of ours had her telephone cut off after my wife used it to call her sister in Hungary. The official reason for the disconnexion was that she had offered the use of her telephone to "persons who have no right to that."

A friend of my wife's who lives in France, Christine Mestre, has been prohibited from entering the Soviet Union for 12 years without any explanation. All our attempts to telephone abroad from friends' homes or from the Moscow Telegraph Office are interrupted on one pretext or another.

The publication of works by me which were ready to go to press in Poland, Germany and Bulgaria has been forbidden. Moreover, they have refused to pay me my fees although official contracts oblige them to do so. The local authorities have repeatedly tried to exert pressure on me as a "parasite." It has been suggested to me that I should take a job as . . . a computer programmer, in other words, in a profession that has nothing to do with mine. Four times I have been summoned to KGB interrogations and once I was brought in for questioning by the police—by force, that is. I was summoned in connexion with the cases of Shcharansky and Orlov. I had only met them once and there was nothing I could say about them. In fact these interrogations were unofficial interrogations of myself.

In April 1977 I received an invitation from the Rector of Munich University to go there for the 1977–78 academic year and participate in a working seminar. At first the Soviet Department of Visas and Registration refused to accept my application. But then, on 16 May, the Moscow Visa Office instructed me to obtain all the necessary documents literally within a few hours. However, another eight months went by. Then, on 25 January 1978, I was informed that my application to travel to Munich had been rejected. Of course, no explanation for the refusal was given. While my documents were lying in the Visa Office I received an invitation to an international symposium on logic in Italy but, naturally, I was unable to go since there was absolutely no way I could make even a formal application to travel. In November 1977 I learned that I had been awarded a European prize in Switzerland for *The Yawning Heights*. But again, I had no opportunity of going to collect the prize (the ceremony took place on 9 December 1977 in my

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

absence). Now I have been invited to give a paper at an international philosophy congress to be held in Düsseldorf in August and September 1978, but I do not even have the means to submit an application to travel there since I am not registered as employed in any Soviet institution. The Soviet representatives on the congress's organizing committee have been pressing for my exclusion from the list of speakers.

Living Conditions and Means of Subsistence

My family has been surviving all this time by selling books and any articles of the slightest value, and also thanks to the help of relatives and new friends. The authorities' efforts to place me and my family in a total vacuum have not met with success—which is highly significant and revealing for the USSR. We have been living and still live in an atmosphere of constant surveillance, intimidation and false rumours. Many people in contact with our family are being similarly subjected to surveillance, unannounced house searches and intimidation. There are grounds for fearing that for some of them the harassment may take a psychiatric turn. The same threat has been made to me too. In fact, I doubt very much whether I would have escaped it had I not taken the trouble in the past to make copies of the medical certificates [of good health] which were issued to me whenever I needed to assemble documentation for proposed trips abroad (which never materialized). I have declined offers of financial help from the West for two reasons: (1) in order not to put myself in the position of a "paid Western spy" and (2) in order to evade the system of virtual robbery by the state which is usual in such cases.

My Book "The Radiant Future"

One year after completing *The Yawning Heights* I discovered that a section of the book ("Notes of a Renegade") had been lost. I restored it, but this time in a different key. The result was "Notes of a Night-watchman." The "Notes" contained a short "Tale of Muscovy" which I later expanded into a work of the same proportions as the entire "Notes." This was "The Radiant Future." I combined the two and called the whole book *The Radiant Future.* It was written at the end of 1975–beginning of 1976, i.e. before the publication of *The Yawning Heights.* On the one hand the book is a continuation and development of the ideas expressed in *The Yawning Heights.* However, with regard to its mood and literary form it is a separate and distinctly different work.

Prospects

To continue living and working in the Soviet Union under these conditions is impossible. My relatives and friends are tired. I therefore intend to try again for permission to go abroad to work in a university

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the West. As a last resort I shall be forced to declare that I am renouncing my Soviet citizenship and to request political asylum in a Western country.

Moscow, 21 February 1978.

Translated by Hilary Sternberg

The Soviet Swift

Michael Heller

A MARVELLOUS book has come out of Moscow, one of the most marvellous to appear for several decades. Naturally, it arrived in the West in manuscript form and, after considerable time and trouble, it has been published here. I would like to say: a marvellous book has once again come out of Moscow and, naturally, it has been published in the West.

By his very title, *The Yawning Heights,* the author skilfully conveys the sense of the book, its form, and the literary method he has employed.

The official name for the future, the established formulation of the Aim is: the shining heights [*siyayushchie vysoty*] of communism. The book is called *The Yawning Heights* [*Ziyayushchie vysoty*]. This alone tells a great deal. The title, however, is merely a foretaste of what awaits the reader who sets out in the author's footsteps in search of the essence of civilization; it is like some forest fire, spreading and eventually engulfing the whole world.

FIRST, though, a word about the author. Alexander Zinoviev is one of the most eminent Soviet logicians; formerly head of the department of logic at Moscow State University, he was a senior research officer in the Academy of Sciences, a Doctor of Philosophical Sciences and the author of numerous books and articles on his speciality which have been translated into many languages. Alexander Zinoviev has all one needs to make it in the Soviet Union. Origin: poor peasant stock. Nationality: Russian. He fought in the Second World War and was awarded decorations and medals. A Party member, he joined after the death of Stalin. But all these "positive" qualities are excelled by "negative" ones: brilliant, razor-sharp wit, refusal to submit to prescribed Soviet norms, and, quite simply, the possession of a conscience and a sense of honour.

The ideas Alexander Zinoviev advanced in lectures, unpublished articles and conversations which came to the authorities' notice put an end to his professional activities. His chair and his students were taken away from him and he was deprived of the opportunity to do creative work.

He did, however, go on working. He wrote *The Yawning Heights.*

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IT is impossible to define the book's genre. Different strands mingle, intertwine and fuse—philosophical treatise, sociological analysis, the story of the fate of a great artist, episodes of war recounted with a merciless veracity rare in the world's literature of war, burlesque verses. Everything that happens is depicted in a fantastic, surrealistic light, with a grotesque, sharply satirical eye. What we have is a satirico-sociological investigation written in the form of dialogues. In his exploration of the surrounding world, the society in which he lives, the author pays especial attention to language. In the first place he analyses the language and linguistic forms which make up the basis of Soviet society. To this end he first of all demolishes the official language by introducing into the text—alongside the strictly scientific language of polyvalent logic and the official jargon of newspapers and authorized literature—a colloquial language larded with an abundance of obscenities.

The language of *The Yawning Heights* is the first shock for the unprepared reader. The peculiarity of the society analysed in the book is imitation instead of the real thing, anti-scientism instead of science, fiction instead of reality. Two languages coexist side by side in this society: the official, puritanical, hypocritical, so-called pure literary language, and the language of conversation, of personal contact. The first is the language of fiction, the second the language of reality. By weaving into the book's fabric the unofficial, crude and frequently obscene second language, the writer throws a bridge between fiction and reality and destroys the fiction.

Zinoviev is reluctant to call the object of his investigation by its old name, Russia, and is likewise reluctant to call it by its new name, the Soviet Union. The action of *The Yawning Heights* takes place in the country of Ibansk, which is inhabited by the Ibanskians. The time is the most liberal period in the history of Ibansk, the Period of Perplexity, which began after the death of the Boss.

In fact, the writer scarcely deals with history at all, because Ibansk actually has none:

> The history of Ibansk falls into three unequal halves. The first half is the Period of Disorientation. This is the largest half. During this time, some of the Ibanskians were in labour camps, others were guarding them and still others were forging cadres for the first and second . . . The second half of the history of Ibansk was the Period of Perplexity, known in the Western historical literature as the Accidental Consternaissance. This is the smallest half . . . The third half is the Period of Prosperity. It is difficult to judge the extent of this period at the moment, since it has only just begun. But, all things considered, it looks as though it may surpass the first two halves in every respect.

History, then, is scarcely mentioned, since the Ibanskian's most typical feature is its absence: "The normal person," remarks one of the characters in *The Yawning Heights,* "is a unity of at least three generations. Just calculate how much goes into that. But we are simply stumps

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of people, with no past and no future." As if dreaming—and in their dreams too—some of the book's heroes remember the war, the camps, the time of the Boss. But they live only in the present, the here and now. That " here and now " is the capital of Ibansk in the 1960s.

The dialogue form, " conversations," to use Vladimir Solovev's expression, enables Alexander Zinoviev to present—with one exception—all the views, opinions, and judgments that pass as current among the Ibansk intelligentsia. Exceptions are questions of religion, faith, religious revival, with which the writer does not deal at all. His aim is to analyse Ism which has been established in Ibansk as the Universal Science, to analyse both it and its votaries from the standpoint of true science and logic. Zinoviev excludes religion from the sphere of his analysis since it is pseudo-religion—ideology—that he is exploring. " The concept of a classless society as a concept of science," as one of the characters in the book notes, " is monstrously illiterate from the purely logical point of view. And it is therefore irrefutable. It is simply meaningless from the purely scientific point of view. Therefore it acquires only whatever meaning the authorities choose to give it. There's an example of pure ideology for you."

Everyone in *The Yawning Heights* has " conversations." The book's most striking feature is its multiplicity of voices. The writer allows dozens of characters to have their say—academics, dissidents of various shades and colours, writers, painters and performers, KGB employees, influential civil servants. Together they make up a noisy, many-sided, at once colourful and colourless, profound and meaningless argument about the fate of their country and about human existence. The conclusions of characters who may be considered mouthpieces for the author's own views run through the book as a sort of counterpoint, a strictly scholarly commentary. These people emerge and disappear one after the other, ending up in labour camps or committing suicide. But, without even knowing one another, each passes on the tiny spark of true knowledge to the next. It is a kind of relay of Guardians of the Fire.

All of them have nicknames given to them by the hostile System: Schizophrenic, Slanderer, Shouter, Chatterer. A brilliant painter receives the name Dauber. Zinoviev gives those characters who loyally serve the System at great profit to themselves venerable epithets: Thinker, Sociologist, Scholar.

The Yawning Heights sustains the reader's interest right up to the end. It is a book about the adventures of the mind as it overcomes the deadly obstacles—deadly in the literal, not the figurative sense—on the way to understanding the essence of the System, the new type of society. As in a detective story, the author collects, scrap by scrap, the evidence of the crime—the nature of the society whose ideology is Ism, the society in which " it is easier to build an atomic reactor than a good potato shed. A society in which it is easier to train 10,000 doctors of sciences specializing in the theory of potatoes than 10 people with enough sense to supervise the storage of actual potatoes."

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In this System, fiction is more important than reality, ideology replaces science, and stupidity is safer than wisdom. The regime that governs this society is described thus:

> The Ibansk regime is all-powerful and, at the same time, powerless. It is negatively all-powerful, in that it has every opportunity to do evil with impunity. It is positively powerless, in that it has no opportunity to do good. It has enormous destructive power and scarcely any constructive power. Progress in the economic sphere and in business life in general is no credit to the regime as such. As a rule the regime regards such progress as a necessary evil. This is even more true of success in the cultural sphere. It is not in the slightest a function of the regime. The illusion that it is a product of the regime's activity is created because it is the regime that formally takes decisions about everything, draws up plans, issues instructions and makes reports . . . The presence of power for power's sake here takes the form of control over everything. Control even over the weather. Control even over the biological nature of man.

That is the general formula. The reader will find in *The Yawning Heights* a multitude of revelatory details about various aspects of life in this new type of society in which illusion has taken the place of reality. In it, informing has an important social function:

> To govern a collective, one needs to know the facts of the situation. To do this, as the progressive bourgeois pseudo-science of cybernetics which recently passed into our employ has established, you need feedback. Official reports, accounts, resumés and suchlike are either empty and trite or downright lies and eyewash. But the authorities have to know the real truth. It is here that informing carries out its function of supplying them with the necessary feedback.

In this new type of society the Leader, after the death of the Boss, may even permit himself to say that "people are living badly, starving." But "the fact that he has made mention of the deficiency means that the deficiency no longer exists. It has been rectified."

THE target of Zinoviev's satire is the anti-Utopia which has been proclaimed Utopia, the land of fiction declared reality. A photograph on the book's dust-jacket is clearly intended to illustrate the character of this new type of society: the author stands in front of a building adorned with a banner which reads "Twice decorated with an Order Moscow University Faculty of Philosophy." Just round the corner is a shack, the home of a Moscow resident. The University is fiction, the shack reality.

The target of the writer's satire is, therefore, the intelligentsia which has allowed fictions to gain a firm hold, the intelligentsia which defends an ideology that is at its service. Zinoviev's satire is merciless. There are satirical portraits of half-educated "intellectuals" and servants of

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the regime in Solzhenitsyn's novels and in Vladimir Maximov's *Quarantine.* Zinoviev paints his portraits of the " dominant influences " on the Soviet liberal intelligentsia in sulphuric acid. Many of them are designated by transparent pseudonyms—the most popular Moscow poet, for instance, published in editions running into millions, " the pet of the Organs and the Americans," is called Raspashonka * in the book.

A typical example of Zinoviev's satire is the chapter " The Theatre on the Ibanka." †

> Researchers will be racking their brains for years to come over the secret of the Ibanka Theatre's extraordinary success. But there is no secret. Or, as Chatterer had established, there was a secret, but it lay not in the Ibanka Theatre but in Ibansk itself. If there were no Ibanka the intellectuals of Ibansk would have chosen some other similarly secure place to hold their gatherings and indulge their emotions. This is how it happened. The Director selects a play permitted by the authorities and which lashes out at the ulcers of capitalism. He presents a new interpretation of it. And he has a hit. The theatre is packed out. Half the audience are foreigners, the other half are informers. The third half are all the rest. Tickets are simply unobtainable at the box office because they are allocated and distributed to embassies and ministries. The stage rings with words like Repressions, Firing Squad, Concentration Camp, Butchers . . . But where are these repressions? Here, of course. Where are the firing squads? Here. Who are the butchers? Our people. And the audience explodes into stormy applause. They all rise to their feet and gaze rapturously at one another and at the stage. They all feel they are participants in a great event. And they go home still blathering about it as if they have just come off the barricades or at least made an audacious protest.

Before the play, though, the intellectuals had theorized:

> Shakespeare's theatre existed under a king. Molière's theatre existed under a king. The Ibansk Ballet took shape under the patronage of the Emperor . . . Beaumarchais was an informer. Milton was an informer. Oscar Wilde was a pederast. Bernard Shaw was a . . . All great art needs the patronage of the mighty of this world, said Raspashonka. The conversation took place in the Chief of the Organs' private box, to which Raspashonka had his own key.

THE most serious conversation of all in *Yawning Heights* is an argument about the very crux of the matter, conducted with Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who in the book bears the name Pravdets, Truth-teller. Attempts have already been made for a long time to classify opposition to the Soviet regime. Andrei Amalrik has recently put forward his theory

* *Raspashonka* means a " baby's jumpsuit " (Translator'snote).

† Moscow's Taganka Theatre [*Teatr na Taganke*], one of the most daring and *avant-garde*, within the permissible limits—and occasionally outside them. Its director is Yury Lyubimov, recently in trouble for his " modernized " production of Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades* at the Paris Opera (which never actually opened) (Translator's note).

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of a "wheel" of opposition.‡ In *The Yawning Heights* Chatterer too comes up with a schematic classification. He identifies eight types of opposition:

> First, there are the liberals who aspire to power and imagine that they have a better way of organizing life than the conservatives . . . Second, there are the businessmen who are discontented because things are going badly from the purely industrial point of view. Third, there are the people who are discontented because they cannot spread their wings and achieve their aims within the framework of the existing system . . . Fourth, the members of the creative intelligentsia who are prevented from realizing their potential by directives from above and the assiduous efforts of their colleagues who voice those directives. Fifth, there are those who are familiar with the Western life-style and dissatisfied because they cannot live in similar style here. Sixth, there are those people who accumulate within themselves the general feeling of discontent with the extreme policies of the regime, above all terror and coercion. First and foremost among these people is Truth-teller. Seventh, there are the people who are aggrieved in one way or another by the situation in our country . . . Eighth, are the people who ponder deeply on the essence of existence, independently of violence, the West, the interests of the cause and so on, and, naturally, they are viewed with hostility by everyone else . . . All opposition groups with the exception of the sixth and the last give themselves airs of nobility.

What is the essential nature of the argument between the author of *The Yawning Heights* and Alexander Solzhenitsyn? Zinoviev asks: if terror and coercion were to cease (a purely theoretical question, since it is clear to the writer that the System cannot do without terror and coercion) would the character of society change? His reply is: no, it would remain the same as ever. Zinoviev feels that it is meaningless to approach the new type of society, the "homogeneous society," "from the standpoint of law and morality." In order to gain a real and complete understanding of the essence of the "homogeneous society" it is necessary to break free of it and discard its language and the categories it employs. The main thing is to recognize that it is a normal society, a society in which abnormality has become the norm. It is a society in which sickness is regarded as health. Therefore Zinoviev rejects the notion that has developed of the "homogeneous society" as a system in which there exist, on the one hand, the governors, and on the other, the governed. The governors oppress the governed who, resisting or unresisting, are the object of terrifying experiments. The author of *The Yawning Heights* demonstrates the indissoluble link between governors and governed. He says: We and They are We. One of the most shattering chapters in the book is the one called "An Approach to People." During the war the Supreme Command decides to take an inhabited locality, N—, which is quite useless to anyone. A penal battalion is sent in to attack and

‡ *Survey* No. 99 Spring 1976.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the rear is manned with a line of machine-gunners. The Commander addresses the penal battalion:

> My boys, the Commander bellowed with a mighty roar, Your country does not demand . . . Your country begs you . . . Your country implores you . . . In the name of . . . I declare you all amnestied, roars the Commander. Hurrah, shout the amnestied soldiers in the penal battalion. For your country, for the Boss, you're giving N—, roars the Commander. Hurrah! shout the amnestied soldiers. Any questions? asks the Commander. "Yes, I have one", shouts Deviationist. "Can I do it just for my country?" The Commander looked at the Deputy. The Deputy looked at the Official. The Official looked at the Commander. "Yes", the Commander bellowed. Hurrah! roared the doomed battalion. And, stumbling with fatigue and exhaustion, they plodded off to take N—.

When the war came to an end the mutual bond between governors and governed became even stronger. "It is impossible to be a member of our society without feeling its effect for oneself", the Official of the Organs sums it up.

THE book's main idea may be expressed as follows: specific human material reproduces a specific life system, and the latter, in its turn, reproduces only the human material that preserves it. Specific people have created a society which, on a scale unprecedented in history, is creating people who defend it and have an interest in its existence.

A special feature of Zinoviev's book is that it supplies no positive programme. The wisest of its characters, Schizophrenic, declares: "I do not criticize anyone or suggest anything . . . I merely think." He thinks about the horror of "a situation in which they do not kill anyone but they do something more terrible—they prevent people capable of becoming Human Beings from becoming Human Beings." He thinks about a system in which people "manage without the mechanism known as spiritual life." For "that is too delicate and brittle a structure for us. It cracks at the very first contact with our neighbours."

In analysing the Ibansk system Alexander Zinoviev deduces the general laws of the "homogeneous society," the new civilization, the civilization of the future. Be careful, says one of the book's characters to a foreign journalist visiting Ibansk, Be careful: you are in the society of the future.

The writer's conclusion is tragic: Soviet society is stable, everything is within the norm, for sickness has become the norm. All are sick and, consequently, all are healthy. It is those who talk of sickness who are considered ill. Alexander Zinoviev is sick, for he lives in a society where everyone is sick. But, at the same time, he is also the doctor who has diagnosed the illness and recorded the symptoms of the fatal infection. That is why the sick do not like him: they do not wish to

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

know anything about their illness. That is why he is hated by those whose duty is to treat their patients but who instead are poisoning them.

The writer's conclusion is tragic: on the book's last page the last of the Guardians of the Fire disappears into the crematorium chamber after reading the author's last, ironical comment: "When you leave, please take your ashes with you!" He perishes and the book ends with the words: "And he was no more. And the end had come for everything."

Notwithstanding all this, the emergence in Soviet society of a man who thinks, who is capable of writing *The Yawning Heights*—both an analytical treatise and an indictment—and who has dared to diagnose this incurable disease, renews our faith that perhaps all is not yet lost. Our faith and our hope . . .

* * * * *

ALEXANDER ZINOVIEV's book *Ziyaysushchie vysoty* (*The Yawning Heights*) was published in Russian in August 1976. In March 1977 a French translation appeared and, soon after the publication of the French edition, the Soviet Novosti Press Agency felt it necessary to distribute an article which, among other things, bitterly remarked: "Suddenly Zinoviev, whom few people have ever heard of even in the USSR, has become a topic of conversation in the British Isles, Switzerland, Belgium, Sweden. . . ." The APN writer might have added: and in the USA, West Germany and France. . . .

While the manuscript of *The Yawning Heights* was floating around the West in search of a publisher able to appreciate its merits, its author in Moscow waited in an agony of impatience for the results of his bold challenge to the Soviet system—and continued to write.

The manuscript of his second book, *Svetloe budushchee* (*The Radiant Future*), consists of three parts: "Notes of a Night-watchman," "The Radiant Future" and "The Final Step." Each part represents a complete whole, but all are linked together by the place of action: Moscow, and by the author's intention: the expression of his philosophy. Each part reproduces independently all the elements of the whole.

Zinoviev states his ideas in the preface as follows:

> Specific human material reproduces the existing social system, while the latter reproduces only whatever human material complies with its elaborate, well-regulated mechanics. A closed, autonomous life system is formed which is deeply hostile to any creative process (seen as a violation of normal existence) and which has at its disposal unlimited opportunities to kill the creative principle in itself. However, by virtue of the same laws, it is impossible to maintain this society on a constant level. Degradation is inevitable and it advances invisibly from all the cells of this gigantic mechanism.

In the light of this process the fate of society "comes to depend exclusively on the willingness of specific individuals to launch a struggle

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

against the crippling powers of social laws and to begin to build devices to arrest these powers—a new civilization." The message is clear: "The fate of society can depend even on one single individual —You."

However, it is not easy to build this new civilization, above all because the "struggle against the crippling powers of social laws" must begin with a struggle against oneself, against the *Homo sovieticus* in oneself. The second part of Zinoviev's book, "The Radiant Future," illustrates with particular force and expressive power, this struggle with the self, the struggle for Man and against Soviet man.

Zinoviev uses dialogue form: the characters in *The Radiant Future* talk endlessly about the world that surrounds them, fully recognizing the duality of this world with its everyday reality and its ideological unreality. A symbol of the latter in *The Radiant Future* is the colossal, permanently fixed slogan erected "on Cosmonauts' Prospect at the entrance to Marxism-Leninism Prospect." The slogan proclaims: "Long live Communism—the radiant future of all mankind." The construction had cost: "according to rumour, no less than the total investment in agriculture during the first five-year plan." But, as one might expect, it had been badly built and because of this, major repairs are carried out on it three times a year, as a result of which "the amortization of the Slogan had cost the State several times as much as its construction."

In the shadow of this slogan lies the town in which the heroes of *The Radiant Future* reside. There are two main heroes: the narrator and his best friend Anton Zimin. In fact the two heroes are one and the same person: before and after the decision to embark on the struggle against "social laws" has been taken. Since the author attributes to both the narrator and Anton Zimin many episodes from his own life, we may liken the hero to Alexander Zinoviev himself: Alexander Zinoviev before the writing of *The Yawning Heights,* a talented scholar forging his career in the sphere of ideology but already aware of it, and living his life in the sphere of this lie; and Alexander Zinoviev after having passed the manuscript of *The Yawning Heights* to the West, after having taken the decisive step and left the sphere of the lie. The argument between the main characters of *The Radiant Future,* the voices of their friends and enemies present us with an authentic, tragi-comic picture of the life of the Moscow intelligentsia in the second half of the 1970s. What makes this picture unique is its sharpness, its truthfulness and its fearless description of baseness and heroism.

In *The Yawning Heights* the writer calls one of his characters a "believing atheist." It is a fitting description of the author of *The Yawning Heights* and *The Radiant Future* himself. In spite of everything, he believes in Man, in man's potential to rebel and "to begin to build . . . a new civilization."

Translated by Hilary Sternberg

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Yawning Heights *

Alexander Zinoviev

THIS book is made up of fragments of a manuscript which were found accidentally—i.e. without the leadership's knowledge—on a newly-opened rubbish dump which was soon abandoned thereafter. The ceremonial opening of the dump took place in the presence of the Leader and his Deputies arranged in alphabetical order. The Leader delivered an historic speech in which he said that the age-old dream of mankind would soon be realized, as on the horizon we could already see the yawning heights of socism. socism is an imaginary social order which would come into being if individuals were to behave to one another within society entirely according to the social laws. It can in fact never be attained because of the falsity of the premises on which it is based. Like every extra-historical absurdity, socism has its own erroneous theory and incorrect practice, but it is almost impossible to establish either in theory or in practice what the theory and practice of socism actually are, and to distinguish between them. Ibansk is a populated area inhabited by no one, and which has no existence in reality. And if by pure chance it did exist, it would be a pure figment of the imagination. At all events, if its existence were possible anywhere, it is anywhere but here in Ibansk. Although the events and ideas described in the manuscript are, all things considered, imaginary, they have a certain interest as evidence of the erroneous ideas of mankind and human society held by the remote ancestors of the people of Ibansk.

The Geography of Ibansk

Where is Ibansk? If this question is to be answered on a proper scientific basis, we must have recourse to the most lunatic ideas dreamt up by the most progressive and after them the most stupid physicists of our super-scientific age. But lunatic ideas do not exist, although according to secret police files there are very many lunatic people who have ideas. If lunatic ideas did exist they would almost certainly have been discovered by the physicists themselves, of whom there are almost as many in Ibansk as there are members of the secret police. And in Teacher's opinion, the problem itself is improperly formulated. It should have been posed thus: how do you get into Ibansk? It would then immediately become clear that the problem is very simple. To get into Ibansk one must write an application, provide a character reference, fill in a questionnaire and

* These excerpts are from Alexander Zinoviev's book, *The Yawning Heights*, © Editions l'Age d'Homme 1976. The translation by Gordon Clough is © The Bodley Head Ltd. 1978, and is reproduced with their permission. Their edition of *The Yawning Heights* is due to be published in 1979.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

furnish a *curriculum vitae*. The *curriculum vitae* must include the names of all deceased relatives, both one's own and everybody else's. They must be prepared to sign a guarantee that they will stay where they are and that they won't tell anybody. One must pay one's dues, appear before a commission of pensioners in senile decay, turn out one's pockets, and agree to everything. After one has done all this one no longer needs to know where Ibansk is to be found because one is there already. A much more difficult problem is to know where to find what cannot be found in Ibansk. But to do this one needs a denunciation.

Ibansk occupies almost the entire land surface and has frontiers with every country in the world. These frontiers are a source of great irritation to the Ibanskians. Not because they are not allowed to cross them. They have grown used to this in as much as they have never acquired the habit of being allowed out. What irritates them is that there are in this world fortunate people who through no merit of their own live abroad. Here we are, grafting away for a pittance, suffering, never seeing a thing, while Over There they . . . ! ! !

Left-wing intellectuals began to rack their brains to discover the whereabouts of this centre of population populated by no one, which has common frontiers with all the world and which pokes its nose into everybody's business. But at this moment that *avant-garde* poet Snottyhanky, who, it is recalled, received a slight censure and much consolation, stepped forward and said:

> Gloomy reflections press upon
> My immature and virgin mind.
> Where is Ibansk? not here. Not there.
> It's right up your behind.

"Hark at him!" said the left-wing intellectuals, exchanging knowing glances. They had not yet realized that their time was long past.

Ibanism

Ibanism, which is often for convenience referred to as the Ism, is the theoretical basis of socism. So Ibanism is sometimes also called socism. Ibanism is the highest, the most fundamental, the most profound, all-embracing, omnipotent, irrefutable doctrine of society, affirmed by the whole of man's past development and confirmed by all of man's future development. Such is the unshakeable dogma of Ibanskian society. When Truth-teller said that Ibanism had been imposed by force on the Ibanskian people, and that it stopped them living, he was making a crude error. The Ibanskian people bound itself voluntarily to Ibanism and can no longer live without it. It is Ibanism which lights its way forward. There is no social problem which with the help of Ibanism cannot be resolved in the most exhaustive and

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

uniquely correct way. Moreover, if anyone tries to resolve these problems without the help of Ibanism, then he is doomed in advance to the gravest errors, to total incomprehension, to monstrous distortion and to other similar crimes. And the least of them presents a crack through which idealism might infiltrate. A nod towards idealism is graver still, while to embrace idealism is a still worse crime. And this headlong plunge into crime only ends when, as a result of the inner logic of the struggle, the sinner openly becomes a lackey of imperialism.

In the time of the Boss [. . .] all the Western sociological literature was kept in closed sections of the libraries, literally behind the armour-plated doors. Access to it needed special authority. But these precautions, as posterity showed, were superfluous. Even if it had been permitted, it would have remained unread, or at least misunderstood, owing to the ignorance of foreign languages and the generally abysmal level of literacy. What a few social scientists there were who understood foreign languages and a smattering of the terms of Western sociology were either in the secret police or spent their time digging out quotations for eminent Ibanologists and the higher leadership to use in the next routine pogrom.

But even if all the social scientists had studied foreign languages, even if they had been forced to read foreign books, and maybe even to understand something of them, the situation would not have been essentially changed. This truth came to light in the Period of Perplexity, when some relaxation appeared even in the field of the social sciences. It was in this period, and not in the epoch of the Boss—when there was not such relaxation—that it became clear that the ideological monolithism of Ibanskian society was an organic phenomenon which could develop even in the absence of constraint. In the Boss's epoch the authorities feared that if the reins were slackened then Ibanism would crumble. They themselves did not believe in its all-conquering strength nor in its youth. They themselves believed it to be the product of oppression and enforcement from outside, since historically it had indeed been imported into Ibansk. The Period of Perplexity revealed that Ibanism would have survived even without oppression and that it would have prospered even without any imports from abroad. For Ibanism is the organic product of this society.

Scientific Life

Ibanskian physicists discovered a new elementary particle. In honour of the Ism they named it the Ismatron. The Ismatron has remarkable properties which completely overturn former conceptions of matter while leaving its philosophical concepts untouched. The Ismatron has no dimensions of velocity, mass or charge. It was impossible to detect it with any instrumentation, and so it had to be discovered under the auspices of the very highest form of knowledge—the theory of

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Ism. The physicists who discovered it discovered it before the deadline, and over-fulfilled their plan by 100 per cent. The Ismatron is a unity of opposites. It constantly moves between quantity and quality, is simultaneously found and not found in one and the same place, and progresses from its inferior to its superior state by negating negation in a spiral, and regularly takes its stand beside the proletariat. Dishcloth, Ph.D., has asserted that the classics repeatedly referred to the Ismatron. The Ismatron is just as inexhaustible as the electron. When physicists in the West heard about the discovery of their Ibanskian colleagues, they declared: "Fuck me!" and died of envy. Two intellectuals were put inside for having kept in their homes and distributed shamizdat publications.

Ibanism

Despite its manifest absurdity, or perhaps because of it, Ibanism is an irrefutable truth. When Truth-teller attacked it as the source of all evil, he committed a grave error. Ibanism has never been and could never be the source of all evil, if only for the reason that it is not any ordinary source at all but the prime source. And from the prime source everything proceeds—both evil and good, and consequently nothing at all. For Ibanism itself is derived from everything.

According to the doctrine of Ibanism no one created the world, and indeed it had no birth. It has existed throughout eternity and will go on existing throughout eternity. It develops from the lowest stage to the highest. As an exception, certain parts of the world may skip a few stages of development, provided that they have the authorization of the Ibanskian government, and provided that Ibansk supplies them with disinterested aid. Starting from the electron, which has inexhaustible depths, the world developed to the highest level attainable—the level of Ibanskian society. From now on the entire future development of the world can go forward only on the basis of Ibansk, through the medium of Ibansk, in line with the development of society in Ibansk. Consciousness is the highest form of our capacity for reflection which lies at the basis of existence. It is nothing more than a reflection of existence. Naturally the highest form of consciousness is the consciousness achieved by Ibanskian society, incarnated in Ibanism and in its wise leadership. Nothing higher than that can exist. This of course does not mean that everything stops there in a state of stagnation. The Ibanskian leadership creatively develops Ibanism on the basis of the experience it has derived from the practice of building the total Ism. The latest speeches of Ibanskian leaders and the latest decrees of government are the pinnacle of human consciousness at the present time. And that holds good until the next speeches and decrees.

Briefly, Truth-teller confused the form and the essence of Ibanism. The essence of Ibanism is very simple: Our society is the most perfect,

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the most humane, the most free, the best organized, the most . . . the best . . . the most. . . . The doctrines of Ibanism are the most intelligent, the most profound, the most . . . the most . . . the most . . . of every doctrine of society in general, and of Ibanskian society in particular. If you stumble upon anything good anywhere you must know that it is much better done in Ibansk. If anywhere you discover something bad, you must know that in Ibansk this does not exist, since in Ibansk, as a matter of principle, nothing bad can exist. If anywhere you hear a wise thought, you must know that there are still wiser thoughts on the subject in the concept of Ibanism. If anywhere you observe an error, you must know that this error does not exist in the doctrines of Ibanism, since Ibanism excludes error as a matter of principle. Such, by definition, are Ibanskian society and its scientific interpretation—Ibanism.

The Tragedy of the Comic

Life in Ibansk is comical if it's seen from outside. But Heaven help you if you find yourself playing a part in this comedy. Once the Boss made a bet with his Son that he could never get an examination mark as low as D or even C. There was quite a large sum at stake, and the Son decided to try to win it. He chose as his examiner an old villain with no scruples at all. He entered under a false name, and gave wrong answers. Since there was an instruction that no D's were to be given (because the institute had entered a competition to get 100 per cent pass rate) the professor gave him a C. Of course, the professor didn't know that he was His Son. When the Son gleefully produced the marked paper with his real name on it, the professor had a heart attack. The Son visited him in hospital several times to try to persuade him to give him a C. The professor was afraid he was the victim of a provocation, and insisted on giving him A. The Son wouldn't let him have the marked paper. Finally the professor resorted to cunning—he promised to give him a C, but marked the paper A instead. The Son was furious, and in revenge put about the rumour that the professor had accepted a bribe to give him an A. The bribe allegedly was that the Son had promised to get him a seat in the Academy. The professor was sent to the camps, where he soon expired, thus never realizing that he was the victim of his own stupidity and not of the regime's senseless cruelty. And he died in vain, for the rumour the Son had started came to the ears of the President of the Academy, who issued instructions that the professor should be elected on the next occasion.

The Monopoly of the Theatre of Life

"Just look at this," said Neurasthenic, holding out the Newspaper. "Just read it. The Leader has received the Ambassador. The Leader has arrived in Paris. The President has arrived in Ibansk and has had

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

talks with the Leader. Deputy has received the King. The King has visited the pig farm. A meeting has been addressed by Assistant. Deputy has been awarded a medal. The Leader has been awarded a medal. The metallurgists have over-fulfilled their plan and sent a telegram to the Leader. The harvesters have fulfilled their plan ahead of schedule, and so on. It's exactly the same in the other newspaper, and in the third. And on the radio, And on television. And in films. . . . And in. . . ." "But you shouldn't pay any attention to that," said Journalist. "That's just officialese." "If you're drowning it's not much help to spit," said Neurasthenic. "Its all very well not to pay attention if there were anything else. What you see in the papers isn't just formal officialese, it's our real life. What is it that makes life interesting for people like me? It is its theatrical side, its public appearances. But they've usurped all that for themselves. They have imposed their scene, their game, their theatre on all of us. They ponce around forcing us to watch all their grimaces, and they don't let us do anything ourselves. Their real social life is made up of travels, talks, meetings, speeches, decorations, resolutions and so on. They have nothing else. And they don't let us have anything else. They have transformed their grey, boring bureaucratic existence into a social theatre. And anything that is really theatrical, bright, beautiful, intriguing, they either destroy or drive into the background where it's used as the stage set for their miserable little playlets." It's theatre everywhere," said Journalist. "In our country too." "That's true," said Neurasthenic. "Life always has something of theatre about it. But it matters who the actors are. When the stage is full of little men without an ear, a voice, or taste, all bawling and strutting about, and the auditorium is full of real singers and connoisseurs of beauty, and the former force the latter to sit and listen to them and pretend to be pleased and show their enthusiasm, then it's a nightmare for the audience. But the situation gets still worse when there are only a few isolated people in the audience with taste or voices or a good ear and all the rest are worse than those who are on the stage." "Then leave the auditorium," said Journalist. "And go where?" asked Neurasthenic. "To the Other World beyond? Abroad?" "You're laying it on thick," said Journalist. "By the way, yesterday I went to . . ." "I understand," said Neurasthenic. "You were on the stage. But we're not allowed up there."

Business Life

The business life of Ibansk follows a strictly defined course. It is decided at a high level to raise everything, to increase everything, to improve everything and to eliminate all shortcomings. These aims are fully realizable as there are usually very few shortcomings, and these usually just in individual cases. Decisions of this kind are usually

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

taken at a time when the old leadership is being replaced by a new lot, and the new leadership attribute all shortcomings to the old leaders while keeping quiet about their achievements so as to be able later to claim them for themselves. But if they fail to overthrow the old leadership, the old leaders, under the pressure of present demands, change their old good intentions for even better new ones, or more precisely, present their old idiotic intentions as brilliant new ideas. Since it is impossible to improve and correct everything immediately, it has to be done in a very strict order of precedence: blast-furnaces, computers, cattle, potatoes, poetry, novels, chromosomes, alcoholism, absenteeism. Atoms, rockets and opponents are improved and eliminated systematically. They do not have to take their turn. No open resolutions are taken about them. Everything is done in great secrecy. A strict order of precedence is also observed within each stage of the improvements. For instance a directive is issued to increase meat and milk production and to catch up and overtake America. Europe isn't even mentioned, it's such a trivial comparison! If we're going to do it, it must be on a grand scale! A number of concrete measures are then taken: (1) to increase the number of head of horned cattle producing powdered and condensed milk (in millions of horns); (2) to increase the yields from every milchcow (in millions of half-litre bottles); (3) to increase the number of head of beef cattle (in millions of shashliks per head of population); (4) to increase the meat output per beast, and so on. Although in Ibansk cows have long since disappeared (they have been replaced by motorcycles and electric milking-machines), the decision to increase the number by fiftyfold quite staggers the Western press. And of course the Ibanskian press almost chokes with self-satisfaction. The Ibanskians themselves know perfectly well what all this is worth, don't read the papers and tell each other funny stories about it. Western specialists in Ibanskology, and in particular our most determined enemies, proclaim with a single voice that the Ibanskian leadership has at last decided to tackle the acute food shortage and has prepared practical measures for an upturn in agriculture. This is regarded by all as a clear swing towards the democratization of Ibanskian society. The Ibanskian leadership confirms this publicly, while at the same time assuring the world that in principle we have nothing which needs to be democratized since we are already extremely democratic, and could in no way be more democratic. That friend of Ibansk, the American millionaire Shark, calls on businessmen to make deals with Ibansk on mutually disadvantageous terms. The Ibanskian newspapers begin to publish articles denouncing Western morals and testifying to the severe food shortages the West is suffering. Economists produce incontrovertible figures. For example in America, where there is an acute meat shortage, there is only one kilo of meat per head per week, while we have just decided to raise our production to 50 kilos per head

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

per week. Under the cover of this hullaballoo the leaders take the opportunity to jail a few opponents.

At the same time all the forces of society are directed towards the finding of a solution to the problem in hand; all grab hold of the weakest link and begin to drag the entire chain behind them. Sector plans are proposed. As a result the time needed to complete the task is halved and the target figures are tripled. The shockworkers of the Ism take on vastly increased commitments and stand poised at the spearhead of the working people. The Universal Lathe-operator commits himself to milking single-handed all the billygoats in Ibansk, and Thrasher to shearing a hundred tufts of wool from every black sheep. The whole political education network begins to study the directive and to set examination questions on it. Bachelors of Arts quickly and slickly defend their Master's dissertations, and the Masters their Doctorates. The philosophers theorize the practice of the building of the Ism, and raise it to a still higher level. The Journal publishes a series of articles and organizes a round table which includes the champion of Charles Darwin who has managed to transform a monkey into an Ibanskian. A group of colleagues sets off on a foreign study trip. The newspapers and the walls of houses burgeon with appeals to workers with the udder, the pelt and the snout to increase their milk yields, skin more cattle and boost pig production. The latest achievements of science are applied to production. Cyberneticists suggest that classical music should be relayed to pigsties, which will produce piglets whose tails and ears grow amazingly long in a very short time. Cows are shown abstract and surrealist paintings with an accompanying commentary by leading Ibanskian art critics, with the result that the cows become even more stupid and yield their milk with no resistance at all. On its front page the Newspaper publishes a poem by the disgraced but pardoned Snottyhanky, the favourite of young people, the secret police and the Americans:

The friendly cows both large and small
We shall triple twice.
Harvest up a hundredfold
Milk yields that times twice.
And we shall
begin
to see
The envy
of the
bourgeoisie.

The Journal prints yet another series of articles on the abolition of frontiers. There is a move to propose Claimant for election to the Academy. On the quiet a few more suspect elements are rounded up, and convicted of currency speculation, homosexuality and breaches

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the passport regulations. A number of others are committed to lunatic asylums as a prophylactic measure.

The measures are published. The completion periods are fixed. And during these strictly established periods the workers with the udder, the pelt and the snout begin to produce reports that the plan has been overfulfilled ahead of time. The dates on which the plan has to be overfulfilled and the percentage of overfulfillment are agreed in advance. The same thing goes for the applications for the jobs of the leaders of the struggle for early overfulfillment. Finally, the decorations and the titles are handed out. Despite all this, meat, sausages, vegetables and so on are either in short supply or not available at all. But that is merely a slander by corrupt and parasitic elements who have succumbed to the pernicious influence of the West. The highest leaders go abroad to pursue the cause of world peace and take advantage of the opportunity to buy bread, meat, potatoes and toothpaste.

After a certain time this general trading cycle is complete and everything begins again on a higher level. As is well known, Ibansk is advancing towards the total Ism, advancing in the form of a spiral whose higher curves are below the lowest, which permits this triumphant forward march.

After the measures concerning cattle, potatoes and maize had been taken, they were followed by others on literature, television, films, ice-hockey and 100-square chess. Finally they got round to science. And what they found plunged them into bewilderment: Ibansk, it turned out, was full to bursting with Doctors of Science. Oh, ho! So that's what the matter is! So that's why there are all these shortages, deficits, errors, deviations! We shall have to get to grips with the Doctors and liquidate them as a class.

History Yet to Come, I

When the thirteenth leader was in power the official title of His Leadership was introduced. And so that each His Leadership could be distinguished at least in some particular from his predecessors and successors, leaders were given an official number, like kings in ancient times. In the case of kings this was very unjust because they were all exploiters and right-wing revisionists, but in this case everything was in perfect conformity with the true laws of history. The Boss came to be referred to as His Leadership I, the New Leader who had replaced Hog became His Leadership II, and so on. Special conferences were called to establish the dates of birth and death and reign of each of Their Leaderships, and to catalogue the measures introduced under their wise direction. It was a great achievement. Previously each succeeding leader had roundly abused his predecessor, appropriated to himself everything good that had come out of the previous reign, and attributed to his forerunner everything bad that

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he did himself. When they finally came to realize that the fate of their predecessor was one that they themselves would share, the leaders decided to start giving their due to their predecessors and consequently to themselves. Since every successive leader was a whole head higher than his predecessor, and made a great step forward, this innovation marked the beginning of a period of irresistible progress. The Ibanskians were moving at such a speed that they did not even notice that they had overtaken America and left her somewhere far behind. They had to turn back, as they always needed to keep an eye on America.

His Leadership XIII made an attempt to proclaim the total Ism. There was a momentous build-up to this, the greatest event in the history of mankind. But the attempt foundered. At a secret plenum of the Deputies it was declared premature. Not because, as some hostile historians were to declare later, at the time there was an almost total disappearance from Ibansk of meat, milk, eggs and other carcinogenous products, not yet because, as other friendly historians declared later, it was still too early, but because of the very number XIII. Just at this time Ibanskian scientists discovered (thus stretching their lead over the Americans by 100 per cent!) scientific and philosophical justification for the noxious consequences of this figure. But Chatterer held a different view. He said that His Leadership XIII was shortly to be deposed, and that the Deputies had decided to keep the honour of proclaiming the total Ism for themselves, since each of them had hopes of becoming His Leadership XIV. It was only at this moment that His Leadership XIII realized what a basic error he had made when he proposed the omission of Hog from the list of Their Leaderships. And he died of grief.

History Yet to Come, II

Under His Leadership XV the hostile Western encirclement of Ibansk was completely liquidated, and Ibansk was established over the whole surface of the globe. After appropriate re-education and the rectification of their ideological errors, all surviving Western cities were renamed as Ibanskets, with corresponding serial numbers. Paris, for example, was numbered 031/5634 A. And the Parisians should feel grateful for that, because one little English burg (London or Landon, I forget exactly) was completely abolished. The trouble was that they didn't want to part with their Queen. That's a first-class examples of the monstrously reactionary character of the exploiting classes of the past! They'd accepted everything, given everything in return, agreed to everything. They'd hung up all the portraits. But they didn't want to drop the Queen. It would be a pity, they said. It's a tradition, they said. At the start we dealt very gently with them. What do you want a Queen for, we said. We're all queens now. All equal. All a whole head taller. But they stuck to that same old

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

story. Tradition, they said. It would be a shame. We're used to her. Traditions? Well, in the end we showed them what traditions were —we gave them some of our own.

At that time the moon was not yet part of Ibansk. It had remained on its own. Of course people had already visited it in the days of capitalism. Houses had been built there, and there were reserves of oxygen. Gardens had been laid out, and a goat had been raised. People were beginning to get used to the idea of living there. But they had hardly got back when Ibansk was established throughout the world. The sciences were brought together in a Pan-Ibanskian worldwide Academy of Sciences. The sciences took off with such a mighty leap that even His Leadership's route to the lavatory was calculated in a computer centre which was linked to every computer in the world. The calculation was carried out very precisely: they showed that His Leadership relieved himself exclusively within a radius of 50 metres from the WC (which, incidentally, was made of solid gold), and on one occasion he very nearly made it to the bowl itself. Every building in Ibansk was stuffed full of newly-discovered elementary particles and chromosomes. Outstanding achievements were made in the field of space travel. At the present time even the Pan-Ibanskian Society for the Conquest of the Whole Universe Around the Earth (PISCWUAE) could not have found the moon in the Ibanskian heavens without the help of first-year school children. And as for going there. . . . And anyway, there was no point, and for that matter no resources. "It's of no consequence," said His Leadership. "Even without our disinterested help, they'll snuff it soon enough up there. They won't have anything to breathe, ha, ha, ha." Then someone pointed out to His Leadership that one of our chaps was up there. The Leadership issued a directive ordering him to take charge. "That's a first-class idea," said Deputy. "That way they'll snuff it even quicker."

When he delivered his report to the next Congress, His Leadership declared: "We have achieved the most outstanding success in our history in the field of foreign policy. We have eliminated foreign policy altogether. Now we can throw all our efforts into the field of domestic policy."

Which is what they did.

The Ibanskian's Kiss

Ibanskians have made great contributions to world culture. Radio, the samovar, little wooden dolls which fit inside each other—there's far too much to list [. . .] yet the Ibanskians' greatest contribution to world culture was the custom of the triple kiss. Historians consider that its worldwide spread has had as important an influence on the fate of mankind as the discovery of fire or the invention of the printing press. It is no mere coincidence that the year in which an

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

international assembly adopted the Declaration of the Kiss became Year One of the new calendar. All historical events began to be dated as before or after the Ibanskian Kiss (BIK or AIK).

In the terms of the above-mentioned Declaration, the procedure of the kiss is as follows. The persons appointed to perform the kiss approach each other, their faces bearing an expression which in great Ibanskian literature is interpreted as "Look who's here! It's ages since I last saw you! What a wonderful surprise!!!" When they have approached so far that the lower part of their stomachs are firmly pressed together, the participants in the ritual of the kiss stop and stretch out their arms at an angle of 60 degrees, palms upwards. Simultaneously they open their gobs, not so wide as to let their false teeth drop out, but wide enough to stimulate an adequate flow of saliva, and thrust their lips as far forward as possible. Then, with a sharp movement, they fling their arms about each other, the host-kisser leaning slightly to the left, while his right arm goes up across the left shoulder of the guest-kisser, while his left moves downwards to the right hip joint of the guest-kisser, while the guest-kisser bends slightly to the right, laying his left arm on the right shoulder of the host, and his right on the host's hip. In the past, kissers frequently confused the right and the left of the partner they were facing, and intertwined in such a remarkable way that it was sometimes very difficult to separate them. On some occasions oxy-acetylene cutters had to be used. Then a special set of instructions was drawn up as a supplement to the Declaration and circulated to kings, presidents, chairmen, shahs and similar persons who were admitted to the levels of summit kissing. The instructions were prepared by the Association for Research and Scientific Evaluation of the Problems of Daily Life (ARSEPDL, or ARSE for short)! Misunderstandings became less frequent, and there were fewer grave pathological consequences. At least they occurred only when other points of the Declaration were not observed. For example, if the navels of the two parties were not vertically aligned, then the partner's right shoulder, not his left, would be nearer to the kisser's right hand, while his left hip, not his right, would be nearer to the kisser's left hand. In such cases, the kissers would spend some time trying to catch each other as if they were playing blind man's buff, giggling merrily the while. "Oh, Your Royal Majesty, where've you got to, fuck you? Ha, ha, ha!" "And what about you, Your Supreme Excellency Comrade Chairman, where are you hiding? Ha, ha, ha!" In the end, the embrace would be established in strict accordance with the instructions, and each of the participants would clap his lips to those of the other, while emitting sounds similar to the bursting of a child's balloon or the extraction of a cork from a bottle, and spattering the onlookers with saliva. They would do this three times. First from right to left, then from left to right, and then directly face to face, the noses

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

being turned slightly to one side. During the performance the onlookers would clap their hands, put on angelic smiles, and chant "Friend-ship! Friend-ship!"

Of course, this custom did not take on immediately. The leaders of Ibansk had to put a good deal of effort and imagination into getting it accepted. Thus, on one occasion, the Leader of Ibansk (Leadiban) was told that the king of some petty Western power, with whom Leadiban had decided to have a heart-to-heart talk, was not prepared to kiss. It seemed that his upbringing would not allow it. He had even laid down no kissing as a condition of the meeting. "That's no problem," said Leadiban. "We've re-educated more stubborn cases than that." And he was of course right. When the king came down the steps of his aircraft, Leadiban walked up to greet him with his hands behind his back. The king sighed with relief, and smiled. That was all Leadiban needed. He winked at the Defence Minister, a sign for the latter to thrust his huge belly covered in decorations up against the puny little kinglet, almost swamping him. The commander of the guard of honour drew his sword with such a flourish right under the nose of his majesticule and brandished it so furiously, that his majesty fled in terror into the arms of Leadiban, who grabbed him and was able to kiss him as much as he wanted. The king spent the next fortnight trying to scrub himself clean, as if he had spent a night in the cage of Ibansk Zoo's old camel, and she had spat all over him. Back home, the king's subordinates began to address him in most familiar terms and demand reforms. And the king abdicated. Briefly, Ibanskian leaders had to kiss several thousand politicians before the custom of kissing took over the world. After this, in the vocabulary of Ibanskian leaders, the old fashioned phrase, "Just you wait, we'll show you!" was replaced by the phrase "Just you wait, we'll kiss you!" A wave of student disorder in Paris was totally inexplicable to Western sociologists, but was brilliantly explained from the Ibanistic point of view by Sociologist, Wife and Louse. For Colleague, the explanation was clear even before the troubles started. And he laughed condescendingly when he read Louse's article in the Journal of Directives. Under the influence of left-wing forces, a café had been opened in Paris under the name of "The Ibanskian's Kiss," and a new perfume of the same name had been introduced. "Just a little patience, now," said Leadiban, "and we'll crush them all like bedbugs."

A Great Victory

The very first day after the Ibanskian Kiss (IK), without any declaration of war the Great Global Kissing (GGK) began. No one knew why. Only after it had ended, and when peace broke out without any declaration of peace, did it emerge that the hostile forces had wanted to reverse the course of history. But the Ibanskians

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

outkissed everybody and covered themselves with eternal glory. From which it followed that, in their view of course, the GGK had been just. It was a further confirmation of the truth of Ibanism, that most scientific of sciences in accordance with which every event in preceding centuries had taken place. The Leader of Ibansk (Leadiban) was awarded 10,000 of the highest decorations, and accorded the supreme military title of Corporalissimus. His Deputies were awarded 5,000 medals each and the rank of Lance-corporalissimus. And so on down, right to the worthless Bloke who ended the GGK as a hopeless buck private and received no medals at all. He was delighted by this, as it could have been a great deal worse. [. . .]

The GGK was the biggest the world had ever seen. And it was the last. "Now the war is over we can really piss in their faces," said Leadiban, crawling out of the cellar from where he had directed operations. And he ordered the Academy of Sciences to prepare for him a 24-hour-long speech to be delivered on the occasion of the Great Victory. [. . .] For the great scientific value of his speech, Leadiban was granted the supreme scientific title of Einsteinissimus. His Deputies were awarded the title of Newtonissimus, and so on right down to the illiterate and worthless Bloke, who was left with no degrees or titles at all, and was delighted because he was left in peace.

During the GGK, Ibansk and its total population were wiped from the face of the earth. But the Ibanskians were in no way disturbed and founded a new city on the site of the old one, but this time a little higher up, on stilts, as it had become dangerous to live at ground-level because of the industrial waste which had completely polluted the environment, and household rubbish. The surface of the land was turned into a rubbish tip and the Ibanskians from time to time organized specially authorized expeditions to search for raw materials and food. Since no one bothered the Ibanskians any more, they swiftly re-established everything that used to exist, and even some things which had never existed. In particular, in their haste, they published a harmful little book by Slanderer. But they caught themselves in time, a feat for which Leadiban was awarded the highest artistic title of Picassissimus. The Deputies were awarded the title of Leonardodavissimus. And so it went on, right down to the worthless Bloke, who was completely indifferent about what might happen to art, and who was delighted to be left in peace. Slanderer was sent to jail, and Leadiban was awarded the highest detective title of Agathachristissimus. In a few words, the Ibanskians had launched themselves on a path of vigorous progress. They developed so fast and so far that, well ahead of their projections, they achieved the supreme decree of socism or of total socism—madogism. They were not so much delighted by this as astonished that they had somehow or other managed to get there. "Who'd ever have thought that we'd make it?" Leadiban said in a drunken conversation with

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his old enemy Chief Theoretician. "Be it said between enemies, no one ever believed in this nonsense. And now look: It's been achieved!" "To be perfectly honest," said Chief Theoretician, "I never believed in it either. We're not as idiotic as all these lousy little intellectuals think we are, not daft enough to believe in that kind of rubbish. I still don't understand how it happened myself. Surely it can't mean that Ibanism is really right? Now that really would be a laugh! Ah well, the hell with theory. Here we go. The time has come to inaugurate this madogism. They're out there waiting for us."

Madogism

"Madogism is the ultimate degree of socism, or total socism," said Leadiban on the eve of the inauguration of madogism in a speech on the occasion of his decoration with the Highest Medal for his services to progress. "It can be distinguished from the inferior stages of socism in the following way. In the inferior stages each individual labours according to his abilities, and receives a reward in accordance with what he has done. As the phrase had it at that time, according to his labour. At the same time, such a level of awareness is reached that each individual knows precisely what abilities he has and which he has not, and never tries to slip beyond the constraints of those abilities. Society has methods powerful enough to prevent an individual from working beyond his ability or trespassing on the abilities of others, and of convincing him that he has got what he deserves. Since everything exists in abundance, the individuals are quite happy and await the arrival of the ultimate stage. At the ultimate stage individuals go on contributing according to their ability but get back what they need rather than what they deserve. At this point awareness develops to such a monstrously high level that even in his dreams every individual remembers what needs he is entitled to and which he is not. And society develops yet more powerful methods to maintain individual consciousness at this supreme level. There's no other way. Otherwise everything would be pillaged in the blinking of an eye. The people! You know the people! You have to keep a firm eye on them! Since we have more than enough of everything, all needs are satisfied and. . . . That is the essence of the matter. Many sceptics believe that men will become so content that they will need nothing better, and that from then on there will be no further need for progress. Progress will stop. Yet we can't do without progress. The theory does not permit it. It is here that we can see the gravest hazard of madogism—there will be such an abundance that there will be no further need for progress. Our enemies are particularly hysterical about this precise and central point of our scientific madogism. Ah ha, they cry. They will have everything in abundance. Everyone will be happy and content. But what happens then? Stagnation? No, we tell them, calmly and firmly. Progress will go on.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It must. That is what the theory and the classics teach us. So what will happen then? Even to that question we have a precise and scientific reply. Then we shall see a struggle between the good and the even better. The even better will conquer the good. And society will continue its vigorous march forward."

Leadiban's predictions were brilliantly fulfilled. As soon as the age of madogism dawned, progress moved ahead at an even swifter tempo. Something good, or even very good, had only to appear for something even better to get to grips with it in the struggle which the even better always won. For instance potatoes that were just about tolerable appeared. And immediately the even better launched itself into the struggle. The earlier potatoes disappeared altogether. And while the victors were being planted they were eliminated by even better potatoes, and so it went on. [. . .] The first stage of madogism is characterized, as everyone knows, by the fact that it saw the emergence of a new and higher form of social community—the queue. At this stage there were still material interests underlying the queue. At the second stage, since those who had been awaiting thingammyjigs in the first stage had disappeared altogether, the queue acquired the attributes of the highest possible form of human community, being based on a high form of consciousness in which the mere notion of needs satisfied becomes equivalent to the actual satisfaction of those needs.

The Radiant Future *

Alexander Zinoviev

All possible variants

"Let's take a sober look at the situation," said Anton. "The liberal era is over. It is now practically impossible to print even the kind of books and articles that were printed three years ago. You've obviously come to feel that yourself. And to do anything like that now would be senseless; it would have no effect. Times have changed also from the point of view of how our output is received. So what's to be done? Now *there*'s a tricky problem for you. And a rather banal one. The dilemma is this: either we stay inside the framework of Marxism or we move outside its limits altogether. Let's examine the first variant. Here again there are two possibilities: either you obediently carry out all instructions from above and become a jackal of the Vaskin type, or you make innovations. The first possibility is not for you. Even if you want to follow that path, they won't let you. It's too late. By their standards you're an innovator. You can make innovations in two ways:

* These excerpts are from Alexander Zinoviev's book, *The Radiant Future*, © Editions l'Age d'Homme 1978. They have been translated by Hilary Sternberg.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by revising Marxism, that is, by reconsidering its basic formulations on the grounds that the principles underlying them no longer answer the needs of present-day reality, or by improving it, i.e. " developing " it in conformity with new conditions without retreating a single step from *any*—not only the main—principles of Marxism. We can rule out revisionism *a priori*. So we're left with improvement. . . . But who decides whether you have improved it or worsened it? The Vaskins. Who decides whether or not you have retreated? Also the Vaskins. So whether you remain an enthusiastic or slightly misguided improver or revisionist is something that depends not on you but on the Vaskins. As far as I can see, the situation now is such that They are more likely to reconcile themselves to revisionists than to improvers, because the improver is a real rival. Now Vaskin too will aspire to enter the ranks of corresponding members. And with no less grounds than you. And if he gets the slightest opportunity to trip you up, he will do it without a second's hesitation. You're an improver and you have kept the Vaskins in the shade for almost 20 years as it is. Now their time is coming. So the better you do your work, the worse it will be for you. And if you do it badly, they'll crush you all the more, because They can do things badly better than you can."

" That's true, on the whole," I commented. " Now what about your second variant? " " I was coming to that," replied Anton. " Moving outside the framework of Marxism opens up the following possibilities: (1) we leave the sphere of ideology altogether or (2) we remain in the sphere of ideology. The first possibility is not for us. We are too old for it. That leaves us the second possibility. Here again there are variants: (1) we criticize Marxism, fight against it or (2) we are indifferent to it. Here we have a far more complicated situation than in the cases I analysed earlier. I'll deal with criticizing Marxism later. First, let's talk about indifference to it. One can be concerned with ideology and at the same time be indifferent to Marxism—in the spirit of Buddhism or Orthodoxy, for instance. It's quite fashionable at the moment but I think you will agree with me that all forms of ideological activity of this kind are inadequate at the present time. What they represent is in fact a retreat from the most important ideological problems of our time. This is not for us. It is for small-fry failures. The question then arises: can one be indifferent to Marxism while concerning oneself with the complexities of the most important ideological problems of our time? Alas I personally have become convinced that this is virtually impossible. Marxism, my boy, is a very serious thing, it seems. You can't get away from it. Whatever problem you tackle, it is certain to have been at all events examined and solved one way or another in Marxism. Whatever you may have to say about it, you're sure to come up against Marxist tradition—Marxist objection or approval. Marxism is a great ideology. Working in the spirit of the ideological problems of the time, you can't help but come up against

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it. That's a fact, and I don't think you need persuading of it. So then, what remains? Struggle? Now *there*'s the rub! "

" Imagine for a moment," Anton went on, " that they gave us complete freedom of action: go on, boys, swear at our Marxism, say whatever you like about it. What then? Haven't there been more than a few such free critics in the West? Haven't they written more than a little? Much more. And they weren't stupid. These writers were intelligent people. But what good did it all do? None. Marxism is still as unassailable as ever. And not because it is right or sensible. That's not the point at all. The point is that Marxism, like any ideology, is not a science. It is cast in a scientific mould—that's the result of the times we live in. But it is not a science. People have always tried their hardest to foist scientific form and status on to it. It's to the advantage of the powers-that-be: everything that happens is the product of objective laws and not of their own stupidity; all they do is discover those laws, foresee events and help them to happen. Remember what Stalin used to say: " Straddle the laws! " That is no empty phrase. It is a very serious proposition. The powers-that-be govern in the name of world laws, not according to the rules of big-time gangsterism. It is also to the advantage of the gigantic army of ideologists: they are scholars, not some kind of priests! It's to the advantage of everyone else: it is better to regard yourself as trapped by the iron laws of matter, than as cunning rogues, scroungers and careerists. So both definite pointers to a science and definite pointers to an ideology exist. Marxism does not satisfy the requirements of the former but it does meet the conditions of the latter—that's a truism. Its alliance with science is an historical peculiarity. In our century of science and technology and universal education it cannot be otherwise. An ideology which does not claim to be a science, does not assume the form of a science and does not have the resources to look like a science to the broad masses cannot, in this day and age, be an ideology. Marxism, as an ideology and not a science, is invulnerable to scientific criticism. And all criticism of Marxism that counts for anything tries to prove it as being scientifically void. Any other kind of criticism—from the standpoint of Christian ideology, for example—carries virtually no weight at all, and Marxism can summon all its powers of demagogy against it. But suppose we do tear Marxism to pieces with our criticism. The problem is: can we offer a better alternative? When we set about constructing our own alternative we shall be forced to do so, once again, in accordance with the laws of constructing an ideology. And we'll just reproduce the same old thing—with negligible modifications. Marxism, after all, grew up on the high road of world civilization. If we construct an ideology in the same place, what we construct will be something after the fashion of Marxism. So, then, does that mean the problem is insoluble? No. The last period was interesting in yet another, very important respect: it indicated a way out. An ideology is defeated by the very facts of the reality it sanctifies. In this par-

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ticular instance, the facts of that very same social reality it claims to generalize, foresee, cognize, and so on. The facts drive Marxism into a trap of its own making. That's why Nikita Khrushchev's secret speech and Solzhenitsyn's books have struck a far more powerful blow at Marxism than the combined efforts of all the critics of Marxism throughout its entire history. There is a way of making a real criticism of Marxism—uncompromising analysis of our actual society, revelation of the facts of its existence. And this way is the only way. This way is also the only way of working out an ideology more adequate than Marxism to the situation of man in contemporary society."

"Granted," I said. "But damn it all why do you need to make this ideology? Just study our society and that's that."

"It's a matter of personal interest," replied Anton. "There are people who become doctors in order to heal the human body. But what interests me is the human soul. Not the psyche, but the soul, a purely social phenomenon. I want to do something for this soul. And that's what ideology is—soul medicine. Marxism no longer has anything to offer the soul. It acts as a purely formal ideological mechanism. Incidentally, *there*'s a fascinating theme for you—the nature of the ideological mechanism in Soviet society. It's quite different from that of a Christian society. Even in Christianity there was an element of force. Even in Marxism there is an element of free will. But still Marxism is hostile to spirituality. It is anti-spiritual. I can't explain it to you in general terms. Study our society and our people as they really are and not as abstract propaganda sees them, and you'll understand it yourself soon enough on every specific point."

We had talked this way many times before. But only now was I beginning to pay attention to Anton's words and to discover in them a meaning which had hitherto eluded me entirely.

Sashka and Anton

"Uncle Anton, how exactly does your position differ from Solzhenitsyn's?" asked Sashka.

"Don't corrupt my son," I said.

"I'm not a baby any more," Sashka replied, "I'll corrupt myself of my own accord sooner or later. So, then, how is it different?"

"It would take a long time to explain," answered Anton. "Well, for a start, our general methods are different. I give my opponent all the advantages; I'm willing to admit almost anything he insists upon. You consider that the revolution was a good thing for Russia? I agree. The Party and the people are united? I agree. Ideology is adequate to society? I agree. From each according to his abilities? I agree. To each according to his needs? I agree. You see, I acknowledge all those things that are regarded as the pluses of socialism and communism—I don't reject them. And that's only the beginning. Proceeding from all these pluses I try to explain all our minuses.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Briefly, I believe that all the shortcomings of communism (and socialism) are not transient historical phenomena or the result of a failure to carry out certain ordinances; they are a product of the incarnation of communism's most positive ideals. Do you understand? I believe that mankind's brightest dreams and ideals, when they are put into practice in reality, lead to the most dismal consequences. But this is not some ideological directive or preconceived idea. It is a conclusion reached by a certain method of analysing society. What Solzhenitsyn does is simply to summarize and describe the facts and put forward certain ideas and generalizations they suggest to him. Such as " repressions are not accidental, we have deceit and corruption, no freedom of expression all around us " and so forth. I have another method. What is it? I can explain it to you crudely and in a couple of words like this. There are laws of human behaviour which I call social. They deal with acts by people in relation to one another and by individual persons in relation to society as a whole and in relation to their own activity. They arise from human nature and from the single fact that a mass of people is forced to live in a common group, a collective. These laws are in themselves (both independently and for illustration) simple and obvious. They may be detected by observation, and people discover them for themselves in practice in the process of their collective life. Imagine the following situation. A group of people, quite a large group, are gathered together in a closed space. They are given food, clothing and lodging in abundance. They are all put in an equal environment—equal in the social respect. How do you think they will get on? The very first thing that will come to light is that they are different and unequal in some respects. The social equality I mentioned will prove inadequate (and unfair) with respect to the real distinctions between them. Very soon these people will divide off into groups, pick leaders and work out a system of conventional values that will reflect their real inequality (holes in their noses, feathers in their hair, painted foreheads, etc.) Imagine further that the means of subsistence at these people's disposal are differentiated so as to be of unequal value. What happens? The process of the collective's structuring will become more rapid and bitter. Add to this a new condition: there are none too many means of subsistence —some are in short supply and there isn't enough for everybody. If, moreover, these means of subsistence have to be procured by labour . . . and so on and so forth. Naturally, this being so, people will commit acts that will influence their position in society and the position of others—social acts. It doesn't take that much intelligence for them to realize which acts strengthen their position and which do not. For example, if A has the opportunity of committing action X or Y with regard to B, A will prefer whichever action, X or Y, weakens B's position or strengthens it less. Imagine, finally, millions of people, billions of acts, [a society] literally teeming with human trivialities. People will draw up for themselves or take over from previous gener-

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ations those rules of social behaviour which will guarantee them the most favourable conditions of existence. This is social life (sociality) in its purest form. Mankind's actual history is such that, along with the growth of human collectives, artificial means of limiting and controlling the combined effect of social laws, sociality, are discovered and developed. They are: traditional customs, morality, the law, religion, property ownership, art, etc. If you want to know what socialism (or communism) is as a specific type of society, imagine the following picture: all artificial limitations on sociality (by which is meant, in fact, civilization) have been destroyed; social laws acquire decisive importance, subordinating all other aspects of life to themselves and developing a system of power, an ideology, an art, etc., adequate to themselves. Socialism is above all the destruction of all the products of civilization (which in our country are termed the institutions of the exploiter class society) and the creation of conditions under which the laws of collective life become paramount. A vast machinery of power is developed which is adequate to these conditions, which itself exists according to the laws of the collective and is self-sufficient. What I've described to you here are no more than the most primitive things —and in simple terms, what's more. But even that's sufficient for you to understand the general orientation of my ideas. Solzhenitsyn, while criticizing Marxism and particular facts of Soviet life, fails to see the whole terrifying normality of communism."

"So communism turns out to be trash," said Sashka.

"That is a matter of opinion," countered Anton. "The communist way of life is beneficial to a vast proportion of the country's population. Just count up how many ministers there are, how many deputy ministers, how many heads of central directorates and trusts, directors, regional and district Party committee secretaries, academicians, writers, artists, officers and generals, etc. etc. right down to policemen, heads of sections, sub-faculties, house management committees, depots and stores and so on and so forth. This system is their system. The work is comparatively light, almost everyone's minimum needs are satisfied and a sizeable part of the population lives extremely well. For the moment, this system satisfies the overwhelming majority of the population. Not in every respect, of course—but by and large."

"Then it must be a good system," said Sashka.

"Neither good nor bad," replied Anton. "One shouldn't make value judgments; they are comparative and subjective. It is what it is. And since it is as I have described it, it also means the rule of mediocrity, careerism, money-grubbing, corruption, hack-work and suchlike. From a certain moment onward, all communism's positive qualities turn against all who are engaged in its preservation and consolidation. Satiety is discovered to have been an illusion, a shortage of good-quality products and articles ensues, the standard of creativity falls, spiritual forms of art are ousted by purely motory, sensory forms; literature perishes, falsehood and demagogy choke one at every step,

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the clowning of bureaucratic officials is becoming a central phenomenon of Soviet life, and so on. A system of violence, prohibitions, registration etc. is inexorably tightening its grip. Universal anger and irritation are becoming the normal backdrop of existence. People expect the worst. We must study all the objective machinery of our society as thoroughly as we possibly can in order to acquire some measure of confidence and find a line of rational conduct aimed at paralyzing to some extent the negative effects of communist society's positive qualities."

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Being Earnest Isn't Always Important

Victor Nekrasov

DEAR, unknown English reader: I don't know what your opinion is of Soviet literature or whether you are at all familiar with any of it. If not, allow me to inform you that it is the most earnest literature in the world. Earnest, because it concerns itself only with earnest matters—life-affirmation, optimism, enthusiasm, love of toil and, most importantly, the formation of a new man. There is no room for jocularity here. Irony, anecdote, allusion and innuendo are not its weapons. Its weapon is of quite another steel, unbending, impenetrable and always shining; and the name of this weapon is socialist realism. The mission of this unique literary school is clear and simple: to prove that all that has been accomplished has not been done for nothing but, dear reader, for your very benefit. The reader—the Soviet reader, that is—does not quibble with this but he prefers *Queen Margot* or the books with which I am about to acquaint you. What I want to tell you about are two books of which Russian Soviet literature (and for that matter non-Soviet, non-socialist-realist literature) of recent years can indubitably be proud. Regrettably, both these books are deprived of a mass readership and if they are discovered in the customs-house at Sheremetyevo Airport they will at the very least be confiscated. However, this in no way diminishes their importance; indeed, I would say it is thereby increased. They can still be purchased on the black market—with a cautious glance over your shoulder—and they will cost you as much as a pound of pressed caviare.

1. Paris—Petushki

To start with, dear reader, imagine for a moment the following situation. A certain Englishman has written a book. He reads it aloud to his friends. They like it and laugh at it. They give it to other people to read, who also like it. These people type out copies of it and pass them on to still more people. The typescript is passed from hand to hand until the entire London reading public has read it and laughed. There is laughter too in Liverpool, Birmingham, Oxford and Cambridge. But the author has not given his book to any publisher—he is wary of something, Mr. Callaghan or Scotland Yard, perhaps, exactly what is not clear. To crown it all, the book, or rather, manuscript, turns up in France, and not just in France, but in the offices of a big Paris publishing house. There they read it, just as in England, laugh long over it and, as a result, it is published. Success. Reviews in all the papers. Success piled upon success . . . But whom to pay the money to is a mystery; it turns out that the author has no address. No address, just that; no one knows

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

where he lives. However, all ends happily: it seems the author has a friend in Paris. This friend produces his authorization, the accounting department hands over the money to him, and he goes and buys a pile of jeans, shirts and footwear of all kinds which he then sends, through friends, to England, to the author of the book who, by the by, has been sitting there penniless.

That's the whole story. Ludicrous, isn't it? And utterly implausible, my reader will add, shrugging his shoulders.

No, it's quite plausible. And it happened—not in the United Kingdom but in a certain mighty and powerful country where freedom of speech, of the press, meetings and assemblies are guaranteed by a new Constitution which has been impatiently awaited by the entire people, although the old Constitution offered the same freedoms too. Admittedly, one scarcely ever encountered them in practice, but the right to them was there, inscribed in shining letters of gold upon the tablets. Whereas in the United Kingdom, it is said, they have all those freedoms—but what are they worth if there isn't even a constitution and nothing shines anywhere in letters of gold?

HOWEVER, let us turn to the facts—and rather curious facts they are, I might add. A certain individual, clearly a suspicious character (he had lost his passport and his military card, without which nobody will employ a person, and he becomes a parasite, which usually means exile to far-flung regions of the Great Power). Well then, this man, either because he had nothing better to do or because he had plenty of free time, sat down and wrote a book called *Moskva-Petushki.* Moskva is Moscow; Petushki is a small station on the railway line to Kursk something over a hundred kilometres from the capital. The book's author—according to available information which, admittedly, has not been verified beyond all doubt—is one Venedikt Erofeyev. The same sources of information say he is about 39 years old, one metre 95 tall, with blue eyes and grey hair. He has no particular profession. He has studied a great deal, but for a number of reasons he never managed to complete his studies. He is a non-Party man, married—twice-over—and has a son. He likes drinking. . . . But stop! I am running ahead.

Having recounted the little and somewhat unclear information that has reached me about the writer, I find myself at a loss to know how to approach the task of telling you about his book, now that the time has come to do so. How am I to answer the entirely legitimate question, the question so familiar to us all from our schooldays: "What did the author mean to say by his book?" I really am up against the wall. But still, I'll try.

Let us begin from afar—well, perhaps not all that far, but anyway, let us begin with a problem which has long been worrying all the peoples, the scientists and the doctors of the world, a problem which the press never tires of discussing and about which hundreds of tomes have been

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

written: alcoholic beverages and the harm (or the good) they do to mankind.

With all the responsibility of a man of experience who has seen something of life, I maintain that on this side of the Berlin Wall (to the West, that is) people simply have no idea of what real alcohol is, or of the varieties it comes in. By alcohol I mean, of course, anything stronger than 40°—wine doesn't count.

Don't smile indulgently, dear reader, and begin rattling off all the varieties of vodka, cognac and whisky; instead, tell me straight and be frank about it—have you ever had occasion to drink the beverage whose constituent parts I shall list in a moment? If you have, write to me directly care of my publisher. I'll stake my life that in all the capitalist countries, the non-aligned countries and so-called developing countries from the North to the South Pole there is no such person nor ever has been.

Here are the ingredients of the cocktail, which is called "Bitch's Guts":

Zhigulevskoe (light) beer	100 grams
"Sadko Rich Guest" shampoo	30 grams
Resorcinol anti-dandruff lotion	70 grams
Foot deodorant	30 grams
Pesticide for small insects	20 grams

I look forward to hearing from you!

Here's another one: have you ever drunk boot polish—blacking, as it is commonly known? Don't look so wide-eyed in astonishment. Our soldiers, in the Soviet Army, that is, do. They drink it as follows: a slice of bread is spread with a thick layer of blacking and left out in the sun. After half an hour the alcoholic vapours from the blacking mixture have impregnated the bread, the blacking is neatly removed with a knife and the bread is eaten, with the appropriate consequences. I do not think a single soldier anywhere else in the world, whether in Her Majesty's forces or those of Idi-Amin himself has tried such a method of gladdening his heart. . . .

What am I leading up to with all this? On the one hand I do it to intrigue, but on the other to warn you. If you are a non-drinker (well, not of blacking, but, let us say, a glass or two of Scotch or cognac in the pub of an evening) then don't even take this book into your hands. It would be a waste of time. It has no subject, the composition is loose, it consists exclusively of the ramblings and meditations of a man who is, putting it bluntly, not entirely sober and, moreover, there are no female characters: that's just the way it is, just reminiscences. . . . However, if you are guilty of dropping into your pub in the evenings or even—God forbid—in the mornings, then I recommend it to you. After all, it's interesting to learn how people live in other countries—and instructive. One should always be open to instruction, whatever one's age—that is something I insist on.

But let us get back, or rather, get down at last to the book from which

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the recipe for Bitch's Guts is taken. What is it about? And why ever has the writer of these lines taken it upon himself to present it to the English reader?

LET'S get down to it, then. . . . Before I do so, however, I must make one thing clear. This is a book that was certainly not written (and therefore is certainly not read) in order that the reader should learn anything he does not already know. On the contrary; it is a book of shared experience. The literature of fiction, which used to go by the fine-sounding name of *belletristika,* belles-lettres, can be roughly divided into two categories of books (leaving aside science fiction and Dostoevsky for the purposes of our classification). There is the unfamiliar world (unearthly love, passions, murders, as well as the lives of other classes, tribes and estates) and there is the opposite, that which is recognizable, familiar, close, related—" look at that, just like us . . . just as though he spied on us and overheard us talking." An example of the first category would be, say, *The Forsyte Saga,* a work which I believe is far better known in my homeland than it is in England. When the *Saga* was being shown on television a few years ago life in my country came to a halt as everyone rushed home and sat glued to their television sets. Yes, those were the days, doesn't it put us all to shame. . . . And they all shook their heads. It is very unlikely that Soviet literature has produced an example of the second category; the few truthful books that do exist are always only accurate (and thus truthful) up to a point. Possibly Chekhov was such a writer for the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia, with his unparalleled perception of the sickness of the age.

As for Erofeyev—our second category—has he perceived the sickness of this age? In reply to that I can only beat my breast in sorrowful recognition.

THE book begins with its hero lamenting the fact that, even though a native Muscovite, he has never seen the Kremlin. He has dreamed of doing so all his life but somehow he has never made it. Why, only yesterday, he says, he meant to, but after leaving the station he started by downing a glass of Zubrovka vodka. " Then," (I quote)

> I had another glass on Kalyaevskaya Street—not Zubrovka this time but Coriander vodka. . . . Then, still on Kalyaevskaya, I added to that two mugs of Zhigulevskoe beer and some Moldavian sweet white wine straight from the bottle. . . . You'll tell me, of course, that I followed that with a Venichka and ask me what I drank next. Well, I don't rightly know myself what came next. I remember —I distinctly remember—drinking two glasses of Huntsman's vodka on Chekhov Street. But I couldn't possibly have crossed the Sadovoe Ring without drinking anything could I? No—which means I must have drunk something else. . . .

Let's tot up what our hero drank, then, to start his journey to Red Square: one glass Zubrovka plus one glass Coriander plus two mugs of

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

beer plus let's say, one glass of Moldavian wine plus two glasses Huntsman's vodka plus something else we don't know, but it must have been equivalent to a minimum of two mugs of beer. Altogether, that makes 600 grams of spirits and two litres of beer. So he had finished up the previous day with all that quantity of liquid in his stomach, somehow coming to rest in some strange doorway or other. And what did he start off today with? Well, I won't bother to count it all up (although in the book the amount is calculated precisely, to the last kopeck—9 rubles 89 kopecks, I assure you, that is the grand total). Let me simply say that in the single day to which the book is devoted our hero probably downed, whether by the glassful or from the bottle, no less than all the heroes of Hemingway's *Fiesta* together in the course of the whole book. And that is where the difference lies. . . .

The difference between what and what? I really hear you asking, and I sense the suspicion with which I must be regarded after all I have recounted. . . . My reply is neither one of crudeness nor of arrogance. It will merely be a statement of fact, or, more precisely, of a difference in habits formed from childhood. For habit and life-style in the course of time create an outlook on life and all its vicissitudes. The Frenchman is accustomed to drinking wine from his childhood; he cannot imagine a meal without a bottle of Beaujolais or something of the kind. The Englishman too from childhood up is used to something; but the Russian . . . Here, though, I leave it to you to read the book for yourself and I think the problem will become somewhat clearer to you. . . .

Ah, once again the mysterious Slav soul—*l'âme slave mystérieuse*. . . . It has to be the soul, of course—not for nothing does the Russian dreaming of alcohol say his "soul is on fire." But there is nothing at all mysterious about that. Putting it simply, his soul really is on fire, and once you have a fire it has to be quenched. So he quenches it. . . . There is, admittedly, another expression "drowning one's sorrows." That does tend to happen too, but the root of the evil (if evil it is) lies elsewhere. Where exactly, I cannot say, although I have an idea I know. However, this is not something that can be explained in a couple of words; it is a serious topic, a theme for a treatise or for reasearch in which I am ill qualified to engage. In artistic form, on the other hand. . . . In a word, I offer you *Moskva-Petushki.*

Incidentally, a French translation has already appeared, idiotically titled *Moscou sur Vodka.* Idiotically because, except for the station, a shop, and those mystifying doorways, Moscow as such hardly comes into it. It exists as a sort of backdrop, a geographical concept, a starting-point for our hero's journey to Petushki after he has once again failed to make it as far as the Kremlin. The reason he is travelling to Petushki is because, as always, his route to the Kremlin has taken him via the Kursk Station [the Moscow terminus for Petushki], and it appears that something delightful and desirable awaits him in Petushki in the shape of a woman. But he never reaches there either, for a whole variety of reasons, and ends up after all on Red Square, where he is murdered by some vicious

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

characters. Or perhaps he is not murdered at all but has simply dreamed the whole episode in one of his usual doorways. That's the whole story of the book. As you can see, there is nothing difficult about it.

There are not many characters either. They consist, in the main, of his fellow-travellers in the train compartment, a restaurant waitress (a purely episodic role) and the dear, benevolent angels who from time to time appear out of the blue and come flying to the assistance of the hero. The people in the train talk amongst themselves, discuss things, quote Turgenev and Goethe, about whom our hero even ventures one or two revelations; they expound their pet theories, occasionally lapsing into silence for a moment to quench their thirst, and when the hero becomes tired of this he disappears out along the corridor to the connecting doors and continues the conversation, this time with himself.

TO summarize, what you will find in the book is "weariness of spirit." But not only that. There is also the utter liberation, the magnificent feeling of freedom awakened by the 9 rubles 89 kopecks' worth of drink purchased in the store (now I've started I might as well go on telling you)—the two bottles of Kubanskaya, two quarter-litres of Rossiiskaya (the word vodka is never pronounced in such cases—it is understood) and a bottle of strong rosé. Were it not for these bottles there would have been no book to be read and passed from hand to hand in Moscow for the last eight years in tattered typewritten sheets. Alas, they are sheets that will never see a printing-house in this land of socialist realism, since the book contains no life-asserting force, no shining horizons and no joyous, inspired toil. However, it does have an essence apart from what I have already recounted. Through the mortal anguish and weariness of a man whose life is something of a failure there penetrates and pervades the entire book something that is as essential to life as bread and air, and that is, humour, and an ironical attitude to many things in life, including oneself. Only intelligent people can afford such a luxury, and if they take up their pen, the books that result are intelligent books. And they may still be amusing, even though the ending is melancholy.

Well, my dear unknown English reader: have I made myself understood and given you a clear idea of the essence of the book? Not really, I fear. But I confess that that was not my intention. I merely wished to arouse your interest. If I have failed to do so, even in spite of the cocktail recipe (and there are several more of them in the book—"Canaan balsam," "Spirit of Geneva," "Tears of the Komsomol Girl," "Auntie Klava's kiss," "Kiss without love" or, more plainly? "Inessa Armand," besides the notorious "Bitch's guts") then I and I alone am to blame, and not you or the book's author. In which case I offer my apologies.

2. Voinovichiada

Vladimir Voinovich's first book, published in 1964 and entitled *We Live Here* was prefaced by a short introduction which said that "this first

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

book by a young writer tells about young people from the virgin lands, about the burdens and the pleasures of their hard daily life, their love, their work, the difficult problems which confront them every working day in the countryside." It is not out of the question that this short preface was the work of the author himself (on the whole, that sort of thing does go on here—" write it yourself, you know better than we do how to present yourself to the best advantage and keep it modest at the same time "). But, at all events, the book was, as they say in our country, warmly received by the critics and the reading public and its author was admitted to the Writers' Union. (Incidentally, one of the two writers who recommended him for admittance was the author of these lines who, as it happened, had not read a single line of the recommendee's work. I was simply told: " The fellow's worth helping and he deserves it—get a move on and write something." I got a move on and wrote the recommendation. When we later made one another's acquaintance we became firm friends.)

Ten years passed, during which time he published two more books, one thicker and one slimmer, and then . . . then Voinovich was expelled from the Writers' Union. He was summoned to the Secretariat and told: " Since you are publishing your books abroad and not at home, and their contents are not at all what we had expected of you, our ways must part here. Good luck to you! " The writer Voinovich had ceased to exist. The dissident Voinovich had appeared.

All of this happened for the simple reason that Voinovich suddenly became tired of writing about young people from the virgin lands, and their burdens and pleasures, and had the urge to write about the life and extraordinary adventures of the soldier Ivan Chonkin. Which he did, and submitted the typescript to one of the " thick " Moscow journals. There they read it, shrugged their shoulders and handed it back. At this juncture the manuscript did in fact find its way abroad—how, God only knows. It was published, and enjoyed by very many people. Not, however, by the Writers' Union. That was why they expelled the author. But before his expulsion there occurred in Voinovich's life an event of no small magnitude. It is to this event that the slim volume* about which I would like to say a few words is dedicated.

IN order to make everything clear from the start to the uninitiated reader I shall have to familiarize him with some of the finer details of housing conditions in the Soviet Union. In our country the areas which a person occupies is called his *zhilploshchad*—living space. Each person has the right to an allocation of nine square metres. If you are a couple you get 18 square metres, in practice, a single room. If an apartment has three rooms you will usually find three families occupying it; if it has four rooms, four families, and so on. This is known as a communal apartment or *kommunalka* for short. It is not the most perfect of

* *Ivankiada* (Ardis, Ann Arbor, 1978).

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

human living systems, but it can't be helped—after all, we have been through a war, among other things; on the other hand it is cheap, which is more than can be said of the West. With the growth of popular prosperity, the Party and government, whose only thought, day and night, is for the welfare of the people, met the workers halfway and sanctioned the organization of housing cooperatives. If, for some (often not fully understandable) reason, you have money, you can become a shareholder in one such cooperative, and when the building is completed you will receive the floor space due to you, without the additional presence of neighbours. For the average Soviet worker this is the pinnacle of his dreams. When the shareholder, pale, drawn and lighter by 15 kilograms because of the nervous agitation and ordeals he has suffered, finally receives the key of his apartment—his very own apartment, where he can go to the bathroom without having to stand in a queue in the corridor and where no one will nick a piece of meat from his frying-pan —it seems to him that he has everything he needs. But it only seems so. . . .

Here I end my brief preamble and come to the point.

VOINOVICH is a writer and at the time in question he was still a member of the Writers' Union. Having accumulated a certain amount of money by his writing and sold his car with the same end in view, he joined the "Moscow Writers'" cooperative and after some time became the owner of a one-room apartment. Since a writer ought preferably also to have a separate study, and since, moreover, an addition to the family was expected, he applied in due course to the cooperative's management, requesting that, in the event that a two-room apartment should fall vacant for any reason, it might be made available to him. His request was entirely legitimate, the meterage of floor space was correct, and the new apartment was promised him.

But then. . . . Then, as Voinovich writes in the preface to his book,

> to my own surprise, I became involved in a lengthy and absurd struggle. . . . For several months I did nothing but write letters and statements, go the rounds of the authorities, make telephone calls, muster supporters, try cunning, lose my temper, fly into rages and swallow several packets of Seduxen and Validol, and it was only because my health was still fairly good in spite of everything that I came through the fight without a heart attack.

All this is the subject of Voinovich's book with the strange title of *Ivankiada,* a derivative of the surname of one Sergei Sergeyevich Ivanko, the book's main hero.

Who is he then, this comrade Ivanko? He is a high-ranking official and a scoundrel—an official, moreover, seated on the literary Olympus, on whom a great many things depend, in particular, whether a book will be published or not. In a word, an influential person with a wide circle of acquaintances in the highest places. This is the man who became

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Voinovich's rival claimant. He had taken it into his head to add a fourth room to his own three-room apartment; the idea was to take the room from the two-room apartment next door which had just been vacated and which was the very apartment to which Voinovich had staked his claim.

And this was where the contest really began.

I HAVE read few books in my time with such passionate enjoyment as this short *Story of the Writer Voinovich's Move to his New Apartment* (the book's subtitle). It contains no deaths, no murders, no incest, no all-consuming love, no spies, no chases—none of these, only a tale of David and Goliath (and, by the way, Voinovich is half-Jewish, half-Serb, although the end result is wholly Russian—that too can happen in our country) and their unequal fight proves more absorbing than any detective novel. In the first half of this article I wrote that learning about other people's lives is not only interesting but very useful, and I still insist that this is true. Especially for readers in those democratic countries where left-wing, socialist party leaders woo the electorate with seductive pictures of Socialism to come. To these readers in particular I would strongly recommend the pictures Voinovich so knowledgably and skilfully paints of life in a country of Socialism victorious. They are most curious and uniquely characteristic.

I shall not retell the story but simply say that, as in the Bible, it all ends with David vanquishing the all-powerful Goliath. Yes, the apartment went to Voinovich, and comrade Ivanko was put to shame despite his having been supported in every possible way by the mighty of this world. Furthermore, Voinovich's victory was achieved with the support of—of all things!—the collective! Incredible, but a fact. To tell the truth, the *Ivankiada* itself, a purely documentary account built exclusively on fact, is an example of socialist realism of the first water, and I hope Voinovich will not take umbrage at me for saying so. The bureaucrat who throws his weight about too much is laid low, while the ordinary writer who earns his bread and butter by the sweat of his brow (ordinary, of course, since his name is not even mentioned in the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia, just like some Solzhenitsyn or other!) carries the day with the help of the good old Soviet collective!

Voinovich ought to be awarded a State Prize for it; instead, he was expelled from the Union. This seems a suitable place to add between the lines that, although the disgraced Sergei Sergeyevich Ivanko failed to obtain the extra room so vitally necessary to him, his loss was compensated with interest: he was dispatched to a regular job in the United States for a period of six years—no less!—a slightly amended version of socialist realism. At all events, Voinovich moved into his new apartment and I visited him there and was even entertained with vodka—admittedly, in the kitchen, since one room was occupied by a howling baby which had somehow managed to arrive amidst all the chaos, and Voinovich's wife would not allow us into the other room, because it was in a mess.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This, then, is the trifling incident—trifling at first sight, to the Western eye, that is—out of which Voinovich has woven a tale which, like the one I spoke of earlier, is still being passed from hand to hand in Moscow and has even been published in book form abroad.

What is it about this tale that is so attractive to Muscovites, Leningraders, Kievans and so many, many other people? It is not simply the lightness and humour with which Voinovich describes the events that forced him to resort to taking Seduxen and Validol, even though Voinovich is a man of talent with a sense of humour and people like him for it. But he is also a fearless man, and here people can only spread their hands helplessly.

"Just think," they say, their hands still spread and the telephone covered with a pillow to be on the safe side, "he's got a wife and a small child, and parents still alive somewhere too, and he goes about unmasking everybody, full names and all, regardless of how important they are. But they go on sitting in their important places and they are a very vindictive lot. . . . They've already disconnected his telephone and once during a conversation with him they palmed off poisoned cigarettes on him and he was ill for two weeks afterwards. . . . Courage wins the day, of course, but with a wife and baby, and another two children by his first wife, they say. . . . No, it's a poor look-out for him."

Now here is where I must chip in on the argument all the way from Paris: "Everything you say is quite reasonable, but the day has to be won, or, if the worst comes to the worst, you have to go on trying to save it. And who is going to do that? You?"

"What has it got to do with us? And who's talking about saving the day? We're talking about families and small children."

"It's precisely the children I want to talk about. They tend to grow up. And ask questions. And what will you reply to them? Shrug your shoulders and point to the ceiling . . . Ssh! But Voinovich will reply. And so will Erofeyev. And Zinoviev. . . . "

I SHALL not argue any further because I know that people will say it's all very well for me to sit here in Paris holding forth. "Yes, it's all very well, I grant you that," I might reply; but I shall refrain from doing so because I'm afraid I might start talking about how I have seen a thing or two myself in my time—and is it worth it? I simply want people to understand—and many people, very many people already do—that Russian literature, real Russian literature may be written and is being written by people who are not only talented and honest but fearless as well. Voinovich is one of these. This is why people love him, respect him and are proud of him. And even, here and there, I might add, fear him.

Translated by Hilary Sternberg

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contemporary Russian Satire

Eberhard Reissner

IN the consciousness of the Russian people literature was always more than a means of entertainment. The great respect which writers enjoyed was founded not least upon the fact that they were seen to embody the nation's conscience. Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Chekhov and Gorky were all constantly aware of this responsibility.

Under different circumstances the same is true of Russian writers today. Whether or not they pay formal allegiance to the dictates of socialist realism, it is out of this feeling of co-responsibility that—directly or indirectly—they communicate their opinions on events in their country.

A wide range of political and ethical attitudes expressed in many different artistic modes is now becoming clearly recognizable. It appears that *satire* as a means of criticizing contemporary Soviet society is steadily gaining significance.

The following brief descriptions of the three most important satirical techniques are illustrated by examples below.

1. The social phenomenon against which the satirical attack is directed is put in a particular, distant, perspective: setting and plot serve to present it negatively, as a special case, which, however, not only stands unambiguously outside the acceptable norm, but also exhibits certain characteristics which are undeniably universally valid. The purpose of this skilful combination in one and the same literary work of the exceptional and the universally valid is to direct attention beyond the work itself. The former characteristic lends the author protection against dogmatic criticism and arbitrary censorship. However, a concession is demanded of him: he must provide a politically "positive" resolution of his literary conflict, allow the norm to triumph, and thereby affirm the accepted order. At the same time, the writer may assume that his reader or his audience will focus their attention above all on the latter characteristic, make adjustments in the light of their own experience of life, and thus recognize what is ostensibly exceptional as typical.

2. The object of attack is relocated to a distant point in time. It is given historical attire and thus assigned to another period. What is important here is that although the period is presented as "the bad old days" it indeed has certain features apparently comparable with those of the present day. By using this device the author forces the censors to make a difficult decision. If they ban the text because they discern allusions to the present therein, they are admitting the viability of a comparison between yesterday and today. They would thus be contradicting the official political doctrine that the social system of today represents a complete victory over the past. Over a

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hundred years ago Saltykov-Shchedrin, the "Russian Swift" turned this state of affairs to his advantage when he pilloried the political conditions of his own time in his satirical chronicle, *History of a Town*. The tsar's censors neither would nor could forbid publication as they would thereby have confirmed that the distorted world of this fictitious town represented the Russia of the tsars.

3. Both devices identified above are well established in world literature. However, there is a third technique which seems to have proved itself wholly relevant and effective only under Soviet conditions. In this case the writer neither employs the device of distancing nor does he make the reader conscious of some abomination through satirical distortion. Instances of the perversion of social life and human relationships with which every Soviet citizen is familiar in everyday experience (and often he is no longer aware of their humiliating nature) become the biographical material of a hero whose disposition is calculated to win him the reader's sympathy. A character who is particularly suitable is one who does not represent the political system, who neither upholds it nor profits from it; he is no "positive hero" endued with unrealistic, idealized qualities, no paragon created in conformance with the reigning doctrine. He is a "man of the people," unprivileged or even underprivileged, with neither the desire nor the opportunity to better himself, but equipped with native wit, practical ability and staying power which always enable him somehow to master everyday problems without losing his human integrity and decency.

The joys and sorrows of such a hero are so common that the average reader experiences and suffers them with him, and through such identification and engagement, elements of his own experiences of life are brought to mind, and he is stimuated into taking a critical view. When this happens, the desired result has been achieved. Understandably, an artistic procedure which is intended to release such emotional and intellectual reactions and to effect a change of awareness considerably limits the chances of the text concerned being approved for publication in the Soviet Union. Writers attempt to meet this problem by developing certain camouflage techniques, perhaps introducing the satirical element into innocuous passages (into a love story, for example), or by creating an external frame which gives the impression that what we have is a special case or a fantastic idea. This of course can at best disguise the basic conflict, but can never obviate it.

Social Distancing Effect

A good example of the technique of *social* distancing, of transposition into a quasi-exotic environment, is the comedy *Energetic People* [1] by

[1] *Energichnye lyudi* in *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, No. 7, 14 & 21 June 1974; produced in Leningrad in 1974 by G. A. Tovstonogov.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Vassily Makarovich Shukshin (1929–74), best known abroad as an actor and film director (*Kalina krasnaya*).

A gang of spivs performs on stage. They boisterously expose their criminal mentality through the merry buffoonery of their behaviour and speech. The turbulent goings-on are brought to an end by the police, and in a final tableau the crooks peep out at the amused audience through the bars of a prison cell.

This ending is artistically untidy in so far as it is ascribable to pure chance. Indeed, this incongruency, this contradiction between the action and the *dénouement* fulfils the twofold function described above. This victory of social justice, of the norm, provides respectability as far as the censors are concerned. At the same time, the audience sees through the contrived ending, for in fact the author has introduced into his play several clear hints that after completing his sentence the clever spiv quickly acquires money and economic influence once again.

Historical Distancing Effect

The second procedure, the technique of *historical* distancing, is superbly handled by the well-known singer and song-writer Bulat Okudzhava (born 1924) in his novel *The Adventures of the Police Spy Shipov in Pursuit of the Writer Tolstoy.*[2] Superficially, his attack is directed against the tsarist police and their informers, and ridicules the authorities of those times. However, it is not a belated reckoning with days of long ago which is intended, but a reckoning with today, and the parallel with present-day conditions is too obvious for the reader to overlook this. By taking an historical theme, Okudzhava puts himself into an unassailable position as far as the censors are concerned.

In the year 1862 Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy fell under suspicion of subversive activities. He caused a sensation by inviting some students to his estate, Yasnaya Polyana, to enlist their help in setting up a school for his peasants to be run according to new pedagogical methods developed by him. The measures taken by the suspicious authorities culminated in a house search carried out while the count was away; even the estate pond was pumped dry (without yielding up any secret printing presses). Okudzhava takes these well-documented events as the narrative's historical core, around which are centred the sharp practices of the police spy, Shipov, who has proved his aptitude for such a delicate assignment through his acknowledged successes in the fight against pickpockets. The fact that during his spying operation this wretched agent does not even set eyes upon the count, and has to concoct the report on his activities in order to secure his expenses, merely supplies the comic pretext for pillorying the actions of mediocre creatures against the nation's spiritual elite.

[2] *Mersi, ili pokhozhdeniya Shipova* in *Druzhba Narodov*, No. 12, 1971.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The reader enjoys the spectacle of the authorities ensnaring themselves in their own misconstructions, and of the system, carrying its methods *ad absurdum,* becoming the victim not of the activity of a writer but of its own incompetence.

Literary Representation of Everyday Phenomena

It is the third of the above-mentioned procedures which seems to me most interesting: the generation of satire by means of the literary representation of everyday phenomena. Here, the distortion of reality impresses only the reader who is *outside* the socialist world, while for the inhabitant of the Soviet Union itself the separate elements of this kind of satire belong to the fund of his own experience of life: it is this factor which determines how the text is received.

The Constellation of the Goataurochs

An excellent example of this is the satirical story by Fasil Abdulovich Iskander (born 1929), an Abkhazian who writes in Russian: *The Constellation of the Goataurochs.*[3] In the centre of events stands a new breed of animal: the cross between a goat and a European bison. This creature owes its existence to the efforts of a maniacal innovator, the agricultural editor of a newspaper, *Krasnye Subtropy,* who has secured the support of a noted Moscow authority. It is obviously impossible either to breed a second generation of this new species, or to arouse the enthusiasm of the collective farm workers for it—of course, no communist enthusiast can be misled by this. Eventually it is the task of the press to assist in overcoming the outdated attitudes and ways of the workers. A full-scale campaign is launched with a leading article headed "The Goataurochs—a Weapon of Anti-religious Propaganda." Speakers swarm out to the villages to lecture on the theme "The Goataurochs—our Pride." (After the lecture the film *The Iron Mask* is shown.) A "Goataurochs Movement" is founded, and the Tobacco Workers' Choir (which admittedly consists mainly of members of the Philharmonic Society) has great success at all popular concerts with an ode to this enrichment of the Caucasian fauna.

Then an article appears in a national newspaper questioning the authority of the noted biologist, and thereby throwing doubt on the whole project. Swift reaction and adjustment are what are needed now. The chief editor of *Krasnye Subtropy* promptly puts himself at the disposal of the national press organization. He resolutely covers up the mistakes of his colleagues, and exercises self-criticism, maintaining that he had been mistaken in not opposing the ill-considered propagation of the goataurochs energetically enough. The enthusiastic agricultural editor has to surrender his chair to the head of the

[3] *Sozvezdie Kozlotura* in *Novyi Mir,* No. 8, 1966.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

propaganda department who, as can be certified by his whole professional experience, has the best nose for everything new. Suddenly, in the correspondence columns of the paper, critical letters supersede letters in favour. The successful hymn becomes an instrumental piece, a song without words. In short, everything is done to erase the new species from the memory of the masses in the fastest possible time. The goataurochs plunges into a kind of Orwellian memory hole—like many a politician before and after him.

The strange title intimates that this apparently trifling tale of everyday life has a wider significance. This significance is, in fact, conveyed at only one place in the text itself, through an image. The first-person narrator, a junior reporter, intoxicated by Abhkazian wine after a convivial evening, believes he can see the head of the new animal in the heavens, as a constellation. It is as though—as in Greek mythology—the gods have allotted a hero a place among the eternal stars, and those on earth are now living in his sign. But it is no more than an alcoholically induced noctural vision. Observed soberly, in daylight, the illusion would dissolve into nothingness.

Thus, the infertile goataurochs symbolizes irrational and ignorant attempts to conquer nature and subject it to the services of official Party dogma (the allusion to the disastrous role of an "authority" like the infamous biologist Lysenko is clear enough). This banal, special case illuminates the whole mechanism which underlies the manipulation of opinions and convictions, the internalization of hypocrisy and toadying, and the sacrifice of independent thought.

The Maker-up

No less deserving of attention are the conclusions to which Alexander Valentinovich Vampilov (1937–72, drowned in Lake Baikal at the age of 34) leads his readers and audience in the two one-act plays, brought together under the title *Provincial Anecdotes*.[4]

The first play bears the title *The Maker-up*.[5] We see how the manager of a provincial hotel becomes violent with a guest when on his late-night rounds he finds him in the wrong room. The young man's assurance that he is in his neighbour's room by her consent, merely in order to listen to the broadcast of a football commentary because the radio in his own room does not work is dismissed by the authoritarian hotel ruler as a cover-up. When, however, the young lady casually mentions that the young man he has just forcibly removed from her room comes from Moscow, the manager, Kaloshin, instantly loses his self-assurance. His anxiety turns into sheer terror when it turns out that the stranger is a maker-up by profession. Indeed, the most he can discover about this mysterious profession is that it has some connection with the press; but that is bad enough:

[4] *Provintsialnye anekdoty* in *Izbrannoe*. Moscow, 1975.
[5] *Istoriya s metranpazhem*, 1971, written in 1962.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MOSCOW and THE PRESS signal a threat. It is too late to apologize: the guest is nowhere to be found. What can be done? Without a moment's hesitation Kaloshin resorts to a reliable, well-proven stratagem: he falls ill. He throws himself into the young lady's bed and summons a trustworthy doctor who promptly diagnoses a heart attack. Swiftly growing into the role of a very sick man, Kaloshin bids farewell to life. Then comes the unexpected turning-point, characteristic of farce: the assumption which has given rise to the whole imbroglio suddenly proves false. The information emerges that the maker-up is a *perfectly ordinary worker,* and this knowledge speedily restores to the hotel manager his health and powers of decision.

The close relationship of the theme to Gogol's *The Inspector* (*Revizor*) of 1836 is obvious. In both cases the resolving factor is chance. In *The Inspector* it is the coincidence of a warning to the provincial officials of the visit of an inspector from the capital with the arrival in the hotel of a traveller from St. Petersburg. In Vampilov's play it is the combination of the guest's origin and mysterious profession with the inadequate education of the manager and his staff. In fact, in both cases, what chance exposes is no more than a social norm. Vampilov's provincial manager is just as easygoing in the exercise of his duties as the civil servants of Tsar Nicholas are—with, of course, the not entirely unimportant difference that Gogol's officials have bad consciences and, on the appearance of the alleged inspector, swiftly do all they can to remedy the most glaring defects, or at least cover them up—while Kaloshin experiences no sense of wrong. Although his conduct is somewhat rude he does keep to the rules. His panic does not develop from pangs of conscience, but has its origin in long years of experience of the unreliability of Soviet justice. When dealing with a man of influence there is always an element of danger; with a representative of the—officially ruling—working class, on the other hand, one is fairly safe.

Twenty Minutes with an Angel

Whereas in the *Maker-up* Vampilov pillories the so-called "administrative approach," the callous, insensitive handling of people, in his second one-act play, *Twenty Minutes with an Angel,*[6] he questions the much-lauded *brotherly solidarity* of the Soviet people.

Two workers on a business trip are stranded in a provincial hotel after an extravagant drinking session without a kopek to their names, unable even to buy a bottle of soda water to quench their thirst. Their neighbours in the hotel, a virtuoso violinist and a young honeymoon couple, refuse to help them. However, an appeal directed out of the hotel window at the Sunday strollers in the street below, and not at all intended seriously, has an amazing effect: an "angel" in

[6] *Dvadsat minut s angelom* in *Angara*, No. 4, 1970.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the shape of a young man appears and offers a hundred rubles, as a loan or as a gift, whichever they prefer. But instead of ardent gratitude, he reaps unbelief. He is tied to a chair and subjected to a thorough interrogation. Has he stolen the money, perhaps, or is he a police *provocateur*? Is he out of his mind? Then, just as they are about to phone the mental hospital, the "angel" agrees to explain his unusual behaviour: this is his home town—his mother had lived here. He had always intended to send her money, but had never actually done so. Now, when he had eventually made the effort to visit the lonely old woman, he found that she was no longer in the land of the living. He vowed to help the first needy person he met. They believe him, vodka is quickly procured, and the conflict is resolved in cheerful harmony.

Doubtless intentionally, the ending of the play takes the edge off its critical effect, without however managing to obscure the crucial message: the ordinary man finds it inconceivable that he could ever receive disinterested help from anyone. Obviously, once the Christian ethic had been suppressed, no new moral code based on socialist principles would develop.

At the end of each of these two satirical plays the action is back to square one. Nothing is changed; none of the protagonists has acquired any new insights. The world remains what it always was and—as with Gogol—the audience is left with the feeling that this or a similar situation could repeat itself at any time, that the pre-conditions for it are inherent in the system itself.

Chonkin—the Anti-hero

The finest example of the kind of satire which arises from everyday reality is undoubtedly the novel *The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin*[7] by Vladimir Nikolaevich Voinovich (born 1932). This anecdotal novel, planned in five parts, could not, significantly enough, be published in the Soviet Union. It brought about the expulsion of its author—a friend of Solzhenitsyn—from the Writers' Union (February 1974).

CHONKIN, a poor orphaned Russian peasant lad, spends his military service in an airforce unit. No fine figure of a soldier, he is employed as a horse-driver. When an aeroplane from his unit, while on a training flight, has to make an emergency landing on a collective farm field, Chonkin is detailed to guard the wreckage. War breaks out, Chonkin's unit is transferred to the front, and the crashed plane and its guardian are forgotten. To be sure, Chonkin dutifully writes a report, but this does not reach its destination because Nyura the postwoman burns the letter. She has no desire to lose the man who has taken up

[7] *Zhizn i neobychainye priklyucheniya soldata Ivana Chonkina*, Parts I and II, (Paris, 1975); *The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin*, (Jonathan Cape, London, 1977).

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

guard next to her personal vegetable patch for he has proved himself equally proficient both in the kitchen and in bed.

This pastoral idyll could have lasted for ever, had not a denunciation brought the security organs into action. Captain Milyaga of the NKVD, duty-bound to greater vigilance on account of the outbreak of war, with the security of his comfortable job in mind, is spurred on to excessive activity and wants to have the alleged deserter arrested. But Chonkin clings to the order not to leave his post and to accept new instructions from no one but his superiors. He disarms the NKVD squad and, shortly after, the captain himself, when he comes looking for his men. Wild rumours promote the "deserter" into the leader of a band of fascist agents, against whom a whole regiment must be put into action. Even Chonkin succumbs to this superior force. Having been decorated for his gallantry by the commander of the militia, a general, he immediately loses his medal when the NKVD men are released from their imprisonment in Nyura's potato cellar. The "deserter" is led away, but comforts the weeping Nyura with the promise to return.

Apart from the few combat scenes in which Chonkin, like a latter-day Ilya Muromets, disposes of a superior enemy force, the people, events and situations in this story are almost totally free of exaggeration or caricature. The unusual phenomenon of a Russian soldier putting his sense of duty above his willingness to be arrested by the security organs is the centre of a mosaic of numerous tragi-comic scenes of everyday life, which in themselves belong to the store of experience of every Soviet citizen. It is only the accumulation and ingenious interweaving of these scenes which builds up the complete satirical picture, the individual elements of which have often the quality of prototypes. What is taking place here among a few people in a small area between a *kolkhoz* and the local town has dimensions on a national scale, is representative of the burdens and shocks of private existence experienced and suffered by millions throughout the country.

Voinovich spares us the worst. If his figures collide with the powers of this world, as a rule they escape with no more than a black eye. But his readers know quite well that what is being presented to them are the humorous variants of something very serious, and that the Gogolian "laughter through tears" is here fully justified. Let us consider, for instance, one of the scenes which delineates the milieu and is only loosely connected with the plot. A poor cobbler who has tried to keep his family from starvation by selling leather in the market is arrested. But his interrogation by Captain Milyaga, which begins with maltreatment, takes an untypical turn: it comes to light that the Jewish cobbler is called Stalin, and to have a memorandum in his cadre files recording the fact that he has arrested a Stalin strikes the captain as not at all expedient. He therefore releases the cobbler. This absurdly comical incident craftily demonstrates the absolute power of the generalissimo: the mere name of the mighty ruler is enough to reverse the normal order, and save a man from the Gulag.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The main arena is the Russian village with all its wretchedness and all its lovable humanity. Voinovich's humour may throw light on the inner contradictions of this world and make them appear more tolerable, but it cannot dispose of them and that, of course, is not his intention. Thus, for example, the populace's mistrust of everything that comes from THEM UP THERE becomes clear, as does the contradiction between enthusiasm invested in private affairs and indifference towards community obligations (which accounts for the cooking of reports on the fulfilment of quotas), which is highlighted when Chonkin introduces his captive NKVD men to socially useful work on the collective farm fields.

We became acquainted with an enthusiastic Lysenkoist who is determined at all costs to cross the potato with the tomato and who brews up a liquor from excrement and sugar (and serves it up to his guest, Chonkin!). A former milkmaid from the village turns up in a black limousine; she owes her advancement and status to a high-speed milking technique which she developed (without, of course, thereby raising milk production). At the news of the outbreak of war the bewildered inhabitants of the collective farm gather in front of the administration building, but can obtain no directions of any kind from the panic-stricken officials. The Party secretary is called to account because he has tolerated "spontaneity," for "sponaneity must be organized"—just one of the many examples through which Voinovich exposes the absurdities of Soviet life.

None of this can be regarded as an artistic distortion of reality. Unlike Saltykov-Shchedrin, Voinovich lifts every detail of the action directly from life and presents it without distortion or exaggeration: life itself provides satire enough. At the same time, however, Voinovich's rustic world has meaning outside itself: it is an allegory of the totality of Soviet life. This may be perceived in the use of certain formal techniques. Thus, he employs a well-tried technique in order to give expression to the typical features and behaviour of a character: so-called "speaking names," which in some cases have cunning dual connotations. A journalist is given the name Neuzhelev, derived from a word for questioning doubt (*neuzheli,* really?), and the courteous, but brutal, NKVD captain has a surname (Milyaga) which may be traced to a word meaning friendly or affable (*milyi*), and so on. A similar generalizing function is fulfilled by dreams, which can help lift the narrative out of the space-time context. Chonkin dreams that he is present at a wedding where the guests turn into pigs, and pester him to try to grunt as well as they can—an unequivocal allusion to the so-called "enlightenment sessions" at which a citizen is supposed to be disabused of his allegedly confused thinking and is tuned into the proper key.

ALTHOUGH it is filled with melancholy images of life and scenes of real anger, this is a cheerful book. The reader is meant to laugh when he recognizes connections between his personal experiences and

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the conditions which affect the whole of society, and at the same time, inwardly rise above them. For in spite of everything, Voinovich the humorist believes in people, in their ability to be good, to gain insights, and to behave in a decent human way. What frequently causes his characters to act against their essential humanity is the order in which they are compelled to live, an order which threatens to disfigure the human personality.

This explains why Voinovich's characters appear the more human, the less they are stamped by this order, the more socially insignificant they are: this is true of Chonkin above all others. Whenever they are freed of their bondage by some superior force, those who normally support and serve the system recover their humanity. So it is with the NKVD men, who suddenly develop a sense of joy in productive work when they are delivered from totalitarian "freedom" into the humanizing conditions of their captivity under Chonkin. And—typical of Russia—the manager of the collective farm becomes increasingly human and natural under the influence of alcohol: the official inside him disintegrates.

Chonkin himself is unmistakably presented as an anti-hero, as a perfectly ordinary common man. This is shown not only by his external attributes, his gift for day-to-day living, and his penchant for unheroic occupations like cooking and sewing, but also by the structure of the narrative itself: he is anything but the driving force of events, quite the opposite. If he is responsible for resolving complicated situations, he does so against his will and against his own interests. Fate has set down a man who is naïve, honest and natural in an environment where such qualities are no longer required. It is not a case of the hero having to prove himself in his struggle with the world, rather of the world having to prove itself worthy of the man!

Translated by Susan MacRae

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Should we Cease to Speak of Totalitarianism?

Maurice Cranston

IT has been forcefully asserted in recent years that we ought to cease to speak of totalitarianism. According to Professor Benjamin Barber, the most interesting exponent of this view, the word "totalitarian" is both ruinously ambiguous and excessively tainted with "ideological and emotive overtones." Barber asks "why social scientists do not simply discard totalitarianism the way natural scientists have rejected such false association terms as 'phlogiston,' 'ether' and 'epicycle'?" And elsewhere he writes of "The Concept of Totalitarianism as the Foundation of American Counter-Ideology in the Cold War." [1]

The main thrust of this argument is that the word "totalitarianism" has come to serve mainly as a stick with which to beat the Soviet Union: to speak of any country as "totalitarian" is to put it in the same category as the Third Reich. Such changes are said to be the results of Cold War passion, unbecoming in a scholar: "totalitarian," we are told, is an insult which does not describe. It is alleged that different authors "define" the word differently: and that sometimes the same author "defines" it differently at different times so that we really do not know what we are talking about.

Professor Frederick J. Fleron, jun., writes:

> I should guess that if we knew enough of the psychology of research we would find that there are those who wish to retain "totalitarianism" in studying communism because of its negative connotation. This may be one of the reasons why the definition of "totalitarianism" is constantly revised so that as the Soviet Union changes (e.g. away from the overt use of terror) the concept can still be used to denote that system. Various acrobatics are performed with the concept (e.g. "mature totalitarianism") so that we can continue to pin a "boo" label on a "boo" system of government.[2]

Fleron is doubtless right in observing that the word "totalitarianism" is nowadays, almost everywhere, a pejorative word. But in this respect it does not differ from a great many other words we are obliged to use in political conversation. Most political words are "boo" words or "hurrah" words. "Democracy" is nowadays almost everywhere a laudatory word, but that would hardly count as a reason for discarding it. "Democracy," again is "defined" in very different ways by different authors, and often by the same author at different times.

[1] The title of a paper presented by Barber jointly with Herbert J. Spiro at the Annual Meeting in 1967 of the American Political Science Association. Reprinted in *Politics and Society*, Vol. I, No. 1 (Nov. 1970).

[2] *Soviet Studies*, XIX, No. 3 (1968), p. 339.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And yet we do not hear it widely recommended that we should banish the term "democracy," like "totalitarianism," in the company of "phlogiston" and "ether."

I shall try to suggest that the word "totalitarian" is entitled to keep its place in our political vocabulary. I do not propose to try to defend a "concept of totalitarianism," but simply to make a brief plea on behalf of the word "totalitarian."

It has not always been a pejorative word. It seems to have made its first appearance in the Italian form of *totalitario* in 1924.[3] And at the time it must, I think, have had a certain Hegelian resonance—a distant connection with the idea of the "total" and the totalizing process. Mussolini's early theorists—Gentile for example—envisaged the diversity and fragmentation of Italian society being unified and totalized by the new Italian fascist state. At the level of metaphysical speculation, the state was conceived as fusing together into one total whole such traditionally conflicting institutions as the Church, monarchy, nobility, bourgeoisie, capital, labour, industry, agriculture, the North, the South, and so forth. At the level of practical policies this dream produced another outcome: namely the domination by the regime of as many of the institutions of Italian society as the regime was able to dominate.

Mussolini did not come anywhere near to realizing the neo-Hegelian dream of the total state: in any strict sense of the word "state" Mussolini did not create a new state at all. But he did introduce certain elements into Italian political organization which were new and for which the word "totalitarian" could be accepted as a useful neologism. The USSR, and later, the Third Reich, revealed even more conspicuous patterns of the same kind, and the word "totalitarian" gained currency as it seemed an apt word to refer to something important and distinctive and novel.

The way to defend the word "totalitarian" is not, I think, to demonstrate that it names something unambiguously, but that it enables us to say something and to be understood in saying it. It has been suggested[4] that the utility of the word "democracy" is largely to be seen in the adjectival form of "democratic." We may look in vain to the world around us for any system of government which satisfies our criteria of a democracy—even Ancient Athens or the Swiss forest cantons have imperfections in terms of an ideal model of democracy —but we can still profitably and coherently speak of one government being more democratic or less democratic than another: we can say, for example, that France, while being much less than a democracy in the pure sense, is much more democratic than Iran.

In the same way, I believe, we can use the word "totalitarian" in an adjectival sense and say, for example, that Mussolini's Italy in the

[3] L. B. Schapiro, *Totalitarianism* (Pall Mall Press, London, 1972), p. 13.
[4] Among others by C. G. Field, *Political Theory* (Methuen, London, 1947).

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1930s was in some respect totalitarian, but less totalitarian than the Third Reich, and less totalitarian than Mussolini's subsequent Republic of Salò. Similarly we may say that the Soviet Union under Stalin was more totalitarian than the Soviet Union under Khrushchev. Using the word " totalitarian " does not commit us to believing that there is one distinctive class of government systems called " totalitarianism ", of which fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and communist Russia may or may not be members. All our use of the word implies is that there are important resemblances between these regimes.

Professor Barber in his influential essay entitled " Conceptional Foundations of Totalitarianism " [5] distinguished, in the literature of the subject, two sorts of " definition " of totalitarianism: those which he calls the " essentialist " and those which he calls the " phenomenological "—the former (which he detects in the work of such writers as Hannah Arendt, Popper, Hayek, Neumann, Talmon and Brzezinski) " defines " totalitarianism in terms of some essential feature such as terror, planning, Utopian social engineering or institutionalized revolutionary zeal; the latter, the " phenomenological " definition (which Barber finds in the writings of Friedrich, Deutsch, Apter and Eckstein among others) simply attempts to " define " totalitarianism by isolating the " objective attitudes " and " performance characteristics " of a totalitarian system.

It is my belief that most of these supposed " definitions of totalitarianism " that Barber speaks of are not properly to be understood as definitions at all—but simply as explanations of what makes a regime totalitarian.[6] Barber himself sees that when Eckstein and Apter,

[5] In C. J. Friedrich (ed.), *Totalitarianism in Perspective* (London, 1969).

[6] The following is Barber's list of " definitions " of totalitarianism (as printed on pages 8–10 of his essay " Conceptual Foundations of Totalitarianism "): a list, as he puts it, of " definitions, presented in alphabetical order by author."

Total terror destroys the space between [men] . . . total terror [is] *the essence of totalitarianism.* (Hannah Arendt)

Totalitarianism [is] . . . a new form of government falling into the general classification of dictatorship . . . a system in which *technologically advanced* instruments of political power are wielded without restraint by centralized leadership of an élite movement, for the purpose of effecting *a total social revolution*, including the conditioning of man on the basis of certain arbitrary ideological assumptions proclaimed by the leadership, in an atmosphere of *coerced unanimity* of the entire population. (Zbigniew K. Brzezinski)

Is there a " totalitarian " in the abstract, or as an ideal type . . . or are there only particular totalitarian systems? [It may be] answered tentatively that there are particular totalitarian systems which are comparable among each other to the extent to which they have certain limited performance characteristics in common. The *three most important of these characteristics are perhaps extreme mobilization of effort, unity of command, and effective power of enforcement.* (Karl Deutsch)

The essence of totalitarianism, then, is that it *annihilates all boundaries between the state and the groupings of society*, even the state and the individual personality. (Harry Eckstein and David E. Apter)

The danger of totalitarianism [is] raised by the policy of economic planning. (Frederick Hayek)

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for example, write " The essence of totalitarianism is that it annihilates all boundaries between the state and the groupings of society," Eckstein and Apter are not giving an essentialist definition. He recognizes that the word " essence " is being used in a loose and non-technical way (by writers who are not philosophers). But Barber does not pursue his enquiry, and fails to notice that Eckstein and Apter —and indeed several of the others he names—are not really attempting to formulate definitions, but are simply pointing to some of the characteristics we look for when we speak of a regime as totalitarian; what they provide are not intended to be definitions, but simply descriptions.

AT the opposite end of the spectrum from those theorists, such as Barber, who wish to banish the word " totalitarian " altogether, are those who wish to apply it to a lavish variety of different political systems. Several recent studies of government in Sweden have described that country as totalitarian [7]: the United States is increasingly often called totalitarian.[8] Professor Herbert Marcuse justifies speaking of the USA as " totalitarian " by saying ". . . contemporary industrial society tends to be totalitarian. For ' totalitarian ' is . . . also a non-terroristic economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests." [9] Numerous regimes of

We define [totalitarianism] merely as a set of methods used, under certain circumstances, by a group or several groups in control of a government in order to retain that control.
(John H. Kautsky)

The basic conception of centralized totalitarianism, as well as its most important instruments, arose prior to industrialism and independently of industrialism.
In pre-industrial societies, as in modern times, the purpose of [totalitarian] centralized political controls is to coordinate as far as possible the activities of a society in the *pursuit of a single goal.*
(Barrington Moore, jun.)

What distinguishes [totalitarianism] from absolutism is not primarily the caesaristic element . . . but rather the destruction of the line between state and society and the total politicization of society by the device of the monopolistic party. (Franz Neumann)

The total state of today above all implies continuous dynamics which cannot be stopped unless stopped permanently. The first aim of totalitarianism is to perpetuate and to institutionalize revolution.
(Sigmund Neumann)

What we call nowadays totalitarianism belongs to a tradition which is *just as old or as young as our civilization itself* . . . [the tradition of] *Utopian social engineering . . . historicism . . . and the closed society.*
(Karl Popper)

The totalitarian democratic school . . . is based upon the assumption of a sole and exclusive truth in politics. It may be called *political Messianism in the sense that it postulates a preordained, harmonious and perfect scheme of things, to which men are irresistibly driven, and at which they are bound to arrive.* It recognizes ultimately only one plane of existence, the political. It widens the scope of politics to embrace the whole of human existence . . . it is vital to add that much of the totalitarian democratic attitude was contained in the . . . eighteenth-century pattern of thought.
(J. L. Talmon)

[7] See, for example, R. Huntford, *The New Totalitarian* (London, 1971).
[8] See, for example, H. Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (London, 1964).
[9] Marcuse, op. cit. p. 3.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Third World are also often spoken of as "totalitarian," even though they have not yet reached the condition of industralization.

One might take a very relaxed view of all this and suggest that "totalitarianism" can have almost as many forms as there are governments in the modern world. Professor Macpherson adopted such a relaxed attitude on the subject of democracy in his book *The Real World of Democracy*, when he argued that democracy today can take one of three forms: that found in capitalist Western countries, that found in socialist Eastern countries, and that found in the Third World. Professor Macpherson's proposal—which is, in effect, to call nearly every modern regime a democracy—seems to me to be on all fours with what is in effect the proposal of Professor Marcuse and others to call nearly every modern regime totalitarian. And whereas Professor Barber's proposal is to banish from the vocabulary a word that is useful; their proposal is to keep in the vocabulary a word which they render useless by making it absurdly protean, applicable to virtually every system.

THE word "totalitarian" has thus to be rescued both from those who wish to banish it, and those who tend to use it too freely. The defence requires us to show that it serves a purpose in our language; and that while it has no "hard edges" round it, there are still limits to the proper use of it.

"Totalitarian" is a new word, and the need for it arises from the emergence of a new thing—namely a system of political organization which the world did not experience before the twentieth century. "Despotism" is a word which has many affinities with totalitarianism: it is an old word, and despotism is a very ancient, very widespread and very familiar form of government. There is hardly any disputing that most governments in the history of mankind have been despotic. But while totalitarian government may well be called despotic, it is *more* than despotism.

What are the distinctive features which mark off totalitarian government from other forms of despotism? Professor Friedrich, setting out what Barber calls a "phenomenological definition" of totalitarianism, but what Friedrich himself put forward as a "syndrome," named six features by which a totalitarian regime could be recognized:

> (1) a totalist ideology; (2) a single party, committed to this ideology and usually led by one man, the dictator; (3) a fully developed secret police; and three kinds of monopoly, or, more precisely, monopolistic control: namely that of (a) mass communication; (b) operational weapons (c) all organization, including economic ones.[10]

Friedrich's list of central characteristics of a totalitarian regime seem to me as acceptable as any such short list is likely to be. It contains

[10] C. Friedrich (ed.), op. cit. p. 126.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

some features which totalitarian regimes share with certain old-fashioned despotisms; a secret police, for example: and some features, such as monopolistic control of operational weapons, which a totalitarian regime might share with a democratic or liberal regime. The dictator, whom Friedrich specifies as being " usually " present, might perhaps be found less usually present in totalitarian regimes of more recent foundation. But these observations do not invalidate Friedrich's list.

One must surely agree that he is right to put first " a totalist ideology." When—as is arguably the case today in Iran—we find every feature of Friedrich's syndrome *except* the totalist ideology, we have a powerful reason for not calling that empire " totalitarian."

Many theorists (and most notably Hannah Arendt) have seen terror as the most important feature of totalitarian regimes: but the terror in a totalitarian system must be seen in relation to the ideology. Numerous ancient despots, such as Caligula, relied on fear, but totalitarian terror is internalized to the extent that the victim must will his own submission to the system. Ideology is the means whereby the will of the rulers is made the will of the masses. A totalitarian system is one in which the populace is not simply subdued but brainwashed.

One feature of the totalitarian regime which Friedrich does not mention is the extent to which the political and the social are fused together in such a way as to produce a community in which there is, paradoxically, very little in the way of either political or social life. The regime permeates everything: all groups, and institutions, even the family itself. Even the single party of which Friedrich speaks has little independence: party meetings are designed to explain to the membership, at the local level, the decisions that have been made by the leadership, and, of course, to mobilize zeal in support of those decisions.

Ideology is a relatively new thing historically: the demand for mass participation in political movements is a new thing, and the need for mass indoctrination is equally new. It is perhaps the case that the public today is too sophisticated to submit to an old-fashioned despotism, and that totalitarianism is the only alternative to freedom that can match contemporary demands.

SOME of the most interesting published work on the subject of totalitarianism—that of Hannah Arendt, for example—has been prompted by a desire to understand the phenomenon of Nazism in Germany. It could be fairly said in criticism of this work that much of the explanation provided is really about the special case of Germany and not about totalitarianism in general.

Indeed there are people who think that while it is permissible to speak of totalitarian regimes, the only true example of the kind the

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

world has yet seen is that of the Third Reich. To name other systems as " totalitarian " is in any case to enter controversial realms. On the question of the Soviet Union, there appear at first sight to be three prevailing schools of thought: that the USSR has always been an instance of totalitarianism; that the USSR has never been; or that there was totalitarianism in the USSR only under Stalin. My own belief that the word " totalitarian " should be used in an adjectival way would permit a further range of judgments: for example, that the USSR was more totalitarian at different times in its history. There are good grounds for saying that it has been to some extent totalitarian at every stage of its history.

In a similar way, I would think it worth asking not whether totalitarianism prevails in Czechoslavakia, Cuba, China, Indo-China or wherever, but to what extent those systems are totalitarian. Whether it is true or false that Cambodia or China, for example, are *more* totalitarian than Czechoslovakia or Cuba, it is a sensible and useful question to ask.

People of an excessive rationalistic way of thinking might suggest that " totalitarianism " is something you must either have or not have: that it is a " package "—as the very concept of totality implies—which must either be present or absent. From the perspective of such abstract reasoning it becomes logical to say that totalitarianism was the Stalinist package: when Stalinism was repudiated in the USSR the totalitarian package was repudiated too, so that totalitarianism, having then been wholly present, is now wholly absent. By similar reasoning it is argued that fascism is a totalitarianism, that the Kingdom of Italy in Mussolini's time was fascist, therefore that that kingdom was a " totalitarian state."

I believe that such reasoning distorts concrete reality: Mussolini wanted a totalitarian regime, but he had to wait until he set up the Republic of Salò to achieve anything like a totalitarian system. Under the Kingdom of Italy, the institutions which refused to be totalized—the Church, the bourgeois industrialists, the nobility, and others—frustrated Mussolini's ambitions: the fascist Kingdom of Italy was never more than partially totalitarian. It was less totalitarian even than Franco's Spain in the 1930s and 1940s—although it must be noted that Franco's Spain become progressively less totalitarian as Franco dispersed the Falange movement, diminished the importance of ideology and transferred his regime more and more into an old-fashioned type of despotism. Some Eastern European regimes—Hungary, for example, and Poland—have become less totalitarian than they were in the early 1950s as nationalist sentiment has stiffened resistance to ideological enslavement; and Czechoslovakia has become more totalitarian as the repressive apparatus has been strengthened against remaining popular yearnings for traditional Czech liberties.

The very pressure of repression, however, is a measure of failure in

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a totalitarian system: it is only when all the people have been made to *want* what they have (is the case of China, and will it soon be the case in Cambodia?) that the difference between a totalitarian and a despotic regime is fully manifest. in other words, the *most* totalitarian regime is the one where the penetration of the regime into the soul of the individual is complete.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Constitutional Totalitarianism

Patrick O'Brien

WHEN asked his opinion of the new Soviet Constitution, Russian *emigré* and former leading campaigner for human rights in the USSR, Professor Alexander Voronel, ironically remarked: "Well, it is better than the old Stalin one because it is at least more honest." [1]

In a very particular sense, that ironic understatement, so misunderstood by many of his listeners, sums up the spirit of this document. Whereas the 1936 Constitution (the Stalin Constitution) provided a democratic gloss behind which tyranny hid, the new Constitution hides little.

The Brezhnev Constitution sets out far more accurately how the Soviet political system works. Vladimir Bukovsky describes it as a "*coup* against the People," [2]—and, indeed, that is precisely what it is. The rights of Soviet citizens have been expropriated by their government. It is, therefore, a unique document in that it codifies and legitimizes the tyranny of a government over all those whom it claims as its citizens. Furthermore, it gives legitimacy to imperialism by writing into the fundamental law of the land provisions for further territorial expansions and conquests, and obliges all citizens to "enhance the might and prestige" of the already large Soviet empire.

It is, then, the first fully-fledged totalitarian Constitution. To put it in Weberian terms, it routinizes totalitarian procedures, establishing the Soviet corporate state in law. What Stalin did was to lay the foundations for such a state in practice, but to deny its existence in theory. Now theory and practice have been made to coincide. The state of "WE," so feared by Yevgeny Zamyatin, has been officially proclaimed. In praise of what he claimed to be the foundations and virtues of the new draft, Mr Brezhnev said:

> The Party has no interests separate from the people. To try to oppose the Party and the people to each other and to talk about a "dictatorship of the Party" is tantamount to trying to oppose, say, the heart to the rest of the human body.[3]

There are now no escape routes or clauses. The masters of Marxist-Leninist double-talk are also the masters of phrasing "Catch 22" clauses and situations. Mr Brezhnev went on to declare that:

> The Communist Party acts within the framework of the Constitution of the USSR. As the Soviet people will tackle ever more

[1] Public Lecture, University of Western Australia, October 1977.

[2] Vladimir Bukovsky, in *The West Australian*, 12 Oct. 1977.

[3] This quotation and following references to Mr. Brezhnev's speech are taken from "Summary of Leonid Brezhnev's Report on The Draft Soviet Constitution and the Results of its Nationwide Discussion," *Soviet News Bulletin*, No. 33, 12 Oct. 1977, Canberra.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> complex and crucial tasks of building communism, the role of the Communist Party will increasingly grow. And this leads not to a restriction but to the ever more profound development of socialist democracy—fully in accordance with our Party's Programme.

According to Mr Brezhnev, therefore, the complete unity of a people in a dimension never before experienced is coming into being within the Soviet Union. For him the planners of the Soviet state have solved ". . . the mastering of the difficult science of organization of the entire social life along socialist lines, including the science of economic planning and management and the education of the socialist consciousness of the citizens."

In other words, Mr Brezhnev has further expanded the CPSU's claim over the minds and bodies of all citizens within the Soviet state. This, it is said, has resulted in a "complete triumph of socialist social relations" and "the gradual development of the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat into a state of the people." When one considers these statements and what they mean in terms of standard Soviet procedures it is little wonder that Mrs Nadezhda Mandelshtam called the second volume of her memoirs *Hope Abandoned.*

Most of the gaps have now been closed, the i's have been dotted, the t's crossed. It is now impossible for a citizen of the USSR to appeal to the text of the Constitution for protection against the arbitrary decisions of the Party-state apparatus. As Mr Brezhnev and the terms of the Constitution so heavily emphasize, the people and the Party are indivisible—with the Party determining on behalf of all individuals, and quite absolutely, the terms of the union. And, as far as the ruling apparatus is concerned, the union and its terms are indissoluble.

The full title of the document is "Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics." The preamble spells out the corporate goals of "society" in historicist terms:

> [The USSR] is a society of mature socialist social relations, in which, on the basis of the drawing together of all classes and social strata and of the juridical and factual equality of all its nations and nationalities and their fraternal cooperation, a new historical community of people has been formed—the Soviet people.
>
> It is a society of high organizational capacity, ideological commitment, and the consciousness of the working people, who are patriots and internationalists. It is a society in which the law of life is concern of all for the good of each and concern of each for the good of all.[4]

[4] From the Preamble to the *Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics* (Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1977). All quotations from the Constitution of the USSR contained in this article are taken from the aforementioned edition of the Constitution.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The "law of life" here constitutes the key phrase. It is noteworthy that the reference is not to laws, but rather to "*the* law of life." To deny this is to deny not merely the validity of the fundamental law of the land (which is constructed on allegedly objective, scientific, and historic truths) it is also to deny the "law of life," and, therefore, life itself.

WITH the adoption of the new draft of the Constitution any hope of East-West cultural and political "convergence" must be abandoned.

The managers of a vast multi-national and corporate, imperial fiefdom have decided that they have had enough of criticism. They have resolved to put an end to the sham of the Stalin Constitution by emphatically proclaiming that there is no possibility of any peaceful transition from one-party dictatorship to some form of constitutional pluralism. In essence this is what this document is all about. It seals the lid on Stalinist institutional forms.

Previously, the realities of Soviet political procedures and the actual rights of citizens bore little relationship to that which was enshrined in the Constitution. Paradoxically, it was that very dichotomy between official theories and practices which engendered some hope in the future. It was hoped, particularly by those who have been described as "dissidents," that one day the relatively democratic clauses of the Stalin Constitution would be implemented, whilst the draconian provisions would wither away, finally to be removed altogether. This Constitution effectively declares that the oppressive state shall not wither away. What little remained of the positive and freedom-oriented promises of 1917 have been negated. All in all, the new Constitution codifies the practices of the integrated one-party state, transforming the individual through fundamental laws into state property to be programmed (i.e. "educated") by the state for the greater glory of the state.

There can be no questioning, no pursuit of any criticism and, far more ominous than that, not even passive silence. All are obliged to be active citizens—that is, all must publicly uphold the historic and scientific truths proclaimed in the Brezhnev Constitution. To remain silent can result in the denial of one's citizenship. In this respect the Constitution could have been written by Robespierre himself, for it was he who bequeathed succeeding generations of revolutionaries terroristic notions of "active" and "passive" citizenship. In the recent past dissenters appealed to the Stalin Constitution for the protection of their rights and liberties. They can no longer do this. Such an appeal now conflicts with the citizens' duty to pay homage to the might and prestige of the most advanced state allegedly constructed on the most advanced and exclusive truths yet discovered by, or revealed to man.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In other words, an appeal to the Constitution for the protection of rights and liberties (particularly if these rights can be identified with bourgeois concepts of natural law) constitutes a (dialectical) contradiction of terms. It is tantamout to an invitation to be prosecuted since such an act can be construed as an attempt to challenge the law of life itself, an idea which epitomizes to the Western mind the crudities of thought backing the claims on behalf of state power made in the Constitution.

THESE notions are reinforced in Chapter 1, "The Political System." Whilst Articles 2 and 5 declare that all power is to be vested in the people, and that the most important matters of state (which are not defined) shall be "submitted to discussion by the whole people and also put to a vote (referendum) by the whole people," they are flatly contradicted by the terms of Articles 6 and 7, among many others. Moreover, the usage of the concept of the "whole people" conforms to one of Hannah Arendt's most incisive findings about the procedures of totalitarian regimes—the technique of involving the masses in the conspiracy of state against themselves; or as Vladimir Bukovsky put it, of mobilizing the people to participate in the *coup* being conducted against them.

Exclusively and categorically, rights have been displaced by duties. All are duty-bound to a state which is now little more than the means by which a self-perpetuating elite maintains mastery over all the means of production, distribution and exchange (including propaganda and communications). The tangled web in which the Soviet citizen is enmeshed is made evident through an examination of key clauses in Sections I and II of the Constitution entitled: "Principles of the Social Structure and Policy of the USSR," and "The State and the Individual," respectively.

Article 6 establishes the CPSU as the guardian of the law of life ("the leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, of all state and public organizations"). It is far more draconian than was Article 126 of the Stalin Constitution, the article which it effectively replaces.

The new, key clause asserting Party control over life concludes as follows:

> The Communist Party, armed with the Marxist-Leninist teaching, determines the general perspective of the development of society, and the course of the home and foreign policy of the USSR, directs the great constructive work of the Soviet people and imparts a planned, systematic, and theoretically substantiated character to their struggle for the victory of communism.

Article 7 further reinforces the Party's absolutist claims by decreeing that, "Trade unions, the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League, the cooperatives and other public organizations participate

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

. . . in managing state and public affairs, and in deciding political, economic, and social and cultural matters." The language of command is unmistakable and, if there had been, there can no longer be any question about the system-reinforcing functions of all Soviet organizations in trade union, political, social or cultural affairs. They are clearly defined as Party-state instruments, the functions of whose membership is to act on behalf of the interests of the leadership. Thus the Party is clearly defined and established in fundamental law as a collectivized version of a *Führer*, something which the Stalin Constitution assiduously avoided. Soviet citizens are permitted to serve the interests of the whole only through the Party and its designated organizations.

CHAPTER 2 of Section I, subtitled "The Economic System," gives, in finer detail, the terms of the collectivist and corporatist, social contract.

Article 10 establishes "Socialist ownership of the means of production" as the foundation of the economic system of the USSR. This category of ownership is subdivided into three components:

1. State property (i.e. property belonging to all the people);
2. Property of collective farms and cooperative property;
3. Property of trade unions and other public organizations.

However, Article 11 decrees that, "State property, i.e. property belonging to all the people, is the principal form of socialist property."

The article then lists the following as state property—the land, its minerals, waters and forests. Immediately following this is the sentence:

> The state owns the basic means of production in industry, construction and agriculture; means of transport and communications; the banks; the property of state-run trade organizations and public utilities, and other state-run undertakings; most urban housing; and other property necessary for state purposes.

What, then, does the state claim neither ownership of, nor control over?

According to Article 13, citizens may have in "their personal possession" earned incomes and savings, a house, a subsidiary husbandry, articles for everyday use and personal consumption and convenience, and the use of plots of land allocated by the state or collective farms for gardening and vegetable growing, and building materials for individual housing.

However, a citizen can be arbitrarily deprived of these possessions since "property in the personal ownership or use of citizens shall not be a means of deriving unearned incomes" or "be employed to the detriment of the interests of society." This concept is specifically reinforced by Article 17 which gives the state the right to determine that work "serves the interests of society."

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Article 14 establishes state control and direction over labour and consumption:

> The state exercises control over the measure of labour and of consumption in accordance with the principle of socialism: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work."

Among other things, this clause is used to justify the privileges accorded to members of the elite, since their work is of greater importance than other kinds of work in Soviet society. Furthermore, "Socially useful work determines a person's status in society."

Therefore, in the allegedly classless society the fundamental law of the land provides not only for the existence of social classes, but also for their gradation; and it does this on the basis of political criteria.[5]

If the authors of the Constitution still had any lingering doubts about possible loopholes in the law of work and life they soon sealed them with the dragnet clause of Article 16.

> The economy of the USSR is an integral economic complex comprising all the elements of social production, distribution and exchange on its territory. The economy is managed on the basis of state plans for economic and social development. . . .

Given the Soviet interpretation of Marxism and the emphasis placed on concepts concerning the inseparability of economics and politics, all this adds up to the state ownership of human beings. As Professor Leszek Kolakowski has so poignantly argued, total state ownership, in particular, means total state ownership of people, since in any system and by any standard, human beings are the principal means of production.[6]

[5] It codifies existing practices into the fundamental law of the USSR. Cf: "The devotion to the pecking order permeates all levels, all walks of Soviet life, a contemporary echo of the elaborate system of 14 ranks that Peter the Great established for the government services. Not only political figures but scholars are carefully stratified from top down. . . . Each rank carries not only its salary scale but special housing allotments and, at the higher ranks, the right legally to hold second jobs and lucrative consultantships. Individual sportsmen, too, are ranked formally by class: Honoured Master of Sport, Master of Sport International Class, Master of Sport Class A, Class B, and so on. . . ." Hedrick Smith, *The Russians* (Sphere Books, London, 1976) p. 320.

[6] "It (i.e. Marxist-Communist doctrine) implied that the 'abolition of private property' equals the 'abolition of classes', and with the end of 'classes' the abolition of conflicts of interests and the establishment of the unity of society. This entirely conformed to the Marxist doctrine which assumed that in 'the final analysis' all the important social conflicts were rooted in class divisions and that such class division would cease to exist once state or 'public' ownership of the means of production is effected. It thus assumed that since 'negative' freedom (i.e. freedom defined by the sphere of decisions left to the individuals by the social organisations) implied conflicting interests, it would lose all meaning in the classless and thus (by definition) unified society. It assumed that when the state would take centralised control of all means of production then 'government over people' would be replaced by the 'administration of things'. Since, however, the centralised administration of all productive processes includes the administration of the human labour force, i.e. all of the People—Marxist Communism, so conceived, could only become a labour camp. And it is far from true that mere

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

By virtue of Chapter 2, all Soviet citizens are declared to be artifacts of the state, to be used and/or abused at, and for the state's pleasure.

CHAPTER 3 of Section I, "Social Development and Culture," does for the individual, education, the arts, literature, science, and social relations what Chapter 2 does for the individual and the economy. It routinizes totalitarian procedures. Principles of collectivism override all other considerations.

Culture is defined in terms of "social development." Thus "the law of life" is applied to the arts and culture. Among other things, this reinforces the entire doctrine of socialist realism. The state is educator, guardian, and director of all social and cultural interests and activities. For instance, Article 25 decrees a "uniform system of public education which . . . provides general education and vocational training for citizens, serves the communist education and intellectual and physical development of the youth, and trains them for work and social activity."

Article 26 declares that, "In accordance with society's needs the state provides for planned development of science and the training of scientific personnel and organizes the introduction of the results of research in the economy and other spheres of life." The almost casual insertion of "other spheres of life" into the clause demonstrates unequivocally that there can be no thought of even the vaguest possibility of conceding the individual any rights whatsoever over the product of his labour.

One would have thought that the point had already been made most strongly for even the most feeble-minded of readers. But for the framers of this document it appears that no point can be made strongly enough. Article 27 acts as a sort of conceptual pile-driver embedding the point as deeply as possible into the consciousness of the reader and into the system:

> The state concerns itself with protection, augmenting and making extensive use of society's cultural wealth for the moral and aesthetic education of the Soviet people, for raising their cultural levels.

Nothing is left outside the dragnet. There can be no area of human activity that the state shall not concern itself with.

historical contingencies were responsible for the actual process leading from doctrine to its Leninist-Stalinist embodiment. That is to say, the doctrine was innocent or became 'distorted' as a result of a whim of history which offered only an improper testing-ground for the experiment. That Marxist communism would mean, once applied, the state ownership of human persons and an extreme despotic form of government, this had been clearly perceived by many anarchist writers of the 19th century long before history made its allegedly unfortunate choice of terrain to apply the new idea." Leszek Kolakowski, "The Euro-Communist Schism", *Encounter*, August 1977, p. 15.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CHAPTERS 4 and 5 of Section I deal with "Foreign Policy" and "Defence of the Socialist Motherland," respectively.

All Soviet citizens are obliged to support the foreign policy objectives of the Soviet Union, "socialist internationalism" and "the security and strengthening of the defence capability of the country." Thus it is clear that the formalized legislative processes laid down in Sections III to VI of the Constitution are merely the playthings of the men of power. Citizens are obliged by the articles of both chapters to support whatever policy-decisions and actions are taken by the leadership, regardless of how they are arrived at or executed.

Article 30 is of particular, and, indeed, vital interest. One might well call it the "*Anschluss* Clause." It reads:

> The USSR, as part of the world system of socialism and of the socialist community, promotes and strengthens friendship, cooperation, and comradely mutual assistance with other socialist countries on the basis of the principle of socialist internationalism, and takes an active part in socialist economic integration and the socialist international division of labour.

The key phrases here are "friendship," "cooperation," "comradely mutual assistance," "socialist internationalism," "socialist economic integration" and "socialist international division of labour." The meanings of these phrases should be quite plain to all those familiar with Soviet writings on these and related matters.

The 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia still remains in most people's minds, (and not the least being the minds of East European communist politicians), the model for "comradely mutual assistance," etc. In Soviet terms—and it is the Soviet Union which dictates these vis-à-vis Eastern Europe—"economic integration" is not feasible without some degree of political integration.

What the Soviet leadership is doing by virtue of Article 30 is staking out its future claims to territories by writing those claims into the Constitution. Furthermore, Article 30 stands as a stark warning to the rulers of the Eastern European communist states that they risk the loss of what remaining national independence and autonomous initiatives in policy-making they have if they do not constantly repress all anti-Soviet and all nationalist outbursts within their respective borders.

Anschluss of the late 1930s type may prove to be unnecessary, as provision for it in the Soviet Constitution by those who have demonstrated that they are prepared to back up their words with military action may be sufficient to induce the giving of "free" consent to Soviet terms of "friendship" and "mutual cooperation." Nevertheless, the Soviet leadership has now clearly enunciated its most cherished goals in its relationship with other socialist states, and has done so whilst conducting its foreign policy under the banner of *détente*.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SECTION II of the Constitution, "The State and the Individual," reinforces the domination of private and social life by the party-state apparatus. Chapter 6 deals with "Citizenship of the USSR" and Chapter 7 with "The Basic Rights, Freedoms and Duties of Citizens of the USSR."

In establishing "equality of citizenship," Article 33 also enunciates uniformity of rights and duties for all the nationalities and can be interpreted as a reinforcement of both "democratic centralism" and of Soviet-style programmes of Russification.

The "protection and guardianship" of the Soviet state is extended to all "citizens living abroad," thus guaranteeing official protection for its employees abroad and punishment for its enemies.

The guarantee of equality of rights for all Soviet citizens contained in Article 35 is immediately qualified, in fact negated, by the standard references in the following article to "Soviet patriotism" and "Socialist Internationalism,"

Article 36, while applying to all Soviet citizens, is directed mainly against the subject nationalities and their supporters:

> Citizens of the USSR of different races and nationalities have equal rights. Exercise of these rights is ensured by a policy of all-round development and drawing together of all the nations and nationalities of the USSR, by educating citizens in the spirit of Soviet patriotism and socialist internationalism, and by the possibility to use their native language and the languages of other people of the USSR. Any direct or indirect limitation of the rights of citizens or establishment of direct or indirect privileges on grounds of race or nationality, and any advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness, hostility or contempt are punishable by law.

This could be termed the reading of the "riot act" to all the nationalities within the borders of the Soviet empire. It can also be related back to Article 30 (see above). Once again the key ideological phrases—the leitmotifs of the multi-national corporate state—such as "all-round development," "drawing together," "spirit of Soviet patriotism," "Socialist internationalism," and "national exclusiveness," are prominently displayed.

Passive citizenship is prohibited by the Constitution. All citizens must be active—that is, they must work for the good of Soviet society as commanded by the enlightened vanguard. Chapter 7 of Section II details the basic rights, freedoms and duties of citizens of the USSR.

The right to work, to leisure, to education, to association, to marry, to religious practice, to raise a family, to privacy, to living quarters, and to complain, are all contingent upon the giving of absolute consent to the proposition that the state has the absolute right to

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

determine what is in the best interests of all, and that all citizens, as their essential duty, have to obey.

The following extracts make this abundantly clear: Firstly, Article 50:

> In accordance with the interests of the people and in order to strengthen and develop the socialist system, citizens of the USSR are guaranteed freedom of speech, of the press, and of assembly, meetings, street processions and demonstrations . . . in accordance with the aims of building communism.

Secondly, taken together Articles 53, 62, 66 and 68 make all other clauses in this chapter virtually redundant. Article 53 places the family under the control (i.e. "protection") of the state. This is reinforced by Article 66 which negates parental rights:

> Citizens of the USSR are obliged to concern themselves with the upbringing of their children, to train them for socially useful work, and to raise them as worthy members of socialist society.

Thus parents are to act as state watchdogs over their children. Moreover, it means that children can, and indeed will, be taken from their parents if the parents do not educate their children according to the canons of Party-state morality and expectations.

Thirdly, Article 44 provides that "citizens . . . have the right to housing," but allows for the interference of the "nanny state" since "citizens . . . shall take good care of the housing allocated to them." In conjunction with earlier clauses forbidding the use of any form of property for socially harmful or anti-state purposes, Article 44 makes the "right" to housing conditional, to say the least.

Fourthly, Article 62 obliges all citizens to celebrate Soviet imperial glory and achievements:

> Citizens of the USSR are obliged to safeguard the interests of the Soviet state and to enhance its power and prestige.

FINALLY, Article 69 declares it to be "the international duty of citizens . . . to promote friendship and cooperation with peoples of other lands and help maintain and strengthen world peace."

For the unwary idealist in the West this may appear at first sight to be a desirable injunction. However, given that in numerous other places throughout the Constitution "international duty" is defined quite specifically in terms of the leadership's usages, it means that one is required to be an active propagandist on behalf of the state's national and international claims. To seek friendship and peace with other peoples or individuals in terms of, or through, philosophies or means that the controllers of the Party-state apparatus disapprove of is to violate the most fundamental principles and laws of the Soviet state.

The remaining sections of the document (III-IX) are concerned principally with the formalized structures of state administration.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What the numerous clauses in these sections do is to tighten the laces of the strait-jacket already constricted around the Soviet body politic in the key sections I and II.

To put it in a nutshell: The Brezhnev Constitution establishes in law the Soviet *imperium* and through an elaborate system of checks protects it and its rulers from the people.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ideology and Totalitarianism *

Raymond Aron

MY friend Alain Besançon's book *Court Traité de Sovietologie* might catch the reader unprepared, and I would not like to be the one to spoil the surprise. Thus, at the risk of writing a postscript rather than a preface, I shall refrain from discussing this concise, aggressive and inspired book, which is animated by a kind of intellectual joy, in a way which would emphasize the contrast between the interpreter and his subject.

Since Stalin's death, people in the West have on the whole convinced themselves that the Soviet Union is a country "like any other," that its regime is comparable with others in history; despotic, true, and without tolerated opposition or free elections, but despotic in the tradition of the ancient Asiatic (if not European) despotisms. More optimistic Westerners foresee a convergence: why should a capitalist system which is heading towards socialism and a socialist system which is heading towards liberalization not eventually move close enough together so that they become simply variants of the same kind of society? After all, the forces or means of production on both sides incline towards the same rationality. Who needs Marxism to concede that machines fashion those who use them, and organizations those who serve them?

Another version of popular Marxism has inclined to a yet more optimistic vision: if the Soviets brought down the iron curtain in order to conceal the cruel aspects of their primitive methods of accumulation of capital, why should they not raise it again on the day they catch up with, if not overtake, capitalism? They would restore freedom or at least certain rights to people as soon as, in the words of Nikita Khrushchev, there was "butter for the spinach and a bowlful of tasty goulash for everyone." The foundations of this smug wisdom, typical of those who pride themselves on their farsightedness on the pretext that they are unhindered by the passions of the common man, have been rudely shaken by the Russian dissidents, Andrei Sakharov and Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

Here is a superpower which owns some 50 per cent more intercontinental missiles than the USA, but where the minimum monthly salary totals 60 rubles and the average monthly salary, 110 rubles (officially 130). According to Sakharov, the purchasing power of the minimum salary is roughly $30. Even if one doubles this estimate, and takes into account the free or cheap social services, the fact remains that the standard of living is incredibly low beside that of Western Europe (Spain included). A family of four which has the use of a three-room flat

* This is the preface to Alain Besançon's book *Court traité de soviétologie à l'usage des autorités civiles, militaires et religieuses* (Hachette, Paris, 1976).

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can consider itself privileged, and more often than not is on friendly terms with those in power.

Here is a regime which offers itself as a model, professes to show the way to salvation to the rest of mankind. Half a century after the revolution it imports tens of millions of tons of grain and forbids ordinary citizens to leave the socialist motherland. In the no man's land between the two worlds, on the borders of the GDR, guard dogs are on constant duty, on the look out for traitors who might opt for freedom. Between the two Germanies, the Berlin wall symbolizes the significance which the men from the Kremlin and Pankow give to peaceful coexistence: they are in possession of the truth, yet refuse all dialogue.

WHAT is it in particular which distinguishes the Soviet Union from the classical despotisms and tyrannies? How can we account for the faith of the true believers, their fear of infidels and the often permanent mark which Marxism-Leninism leaves on those who have embraced it and then renounced it? A single word gives us not the answer, but the essence of our enquiry: *ideology*. Westerners have wanted to forget about ideology; but Solzhenitsyn, and now Alain Besançon in his *Court Traité*, each in his own way reminds us that we can understand neither Lenin, nor Stalin, nor even Brezhnev, if we neglect the doctrine (or the dogma, or the faith—the word itself is of little consequence) in the name of which a Marxist sect seized power and undertook to rebuild the world, to build socialism.

The Bolsheviks had retained only a crude version of Marx's prophecy: a radical breach between capitalism and socialism, the impossibility of any compromise between the two, or even of their reaching compromise through reform. Hence the waiting and longing for revolution, a revolution transfigured into a triumph of truth, a condemnation without appeal of all private ownership (in the widest possible sense) and of free enterprise—two institutions which are excommunicated for ever as inseparable from the sin of capitalism. The Bolsheviks—an intransigent and quarrelsome sect within Russian social democracy (which was itself one of the weak links in the chain of the Second International), accustomed and fated to clandestinity—and even more, Lenin himself, thought of themselves as charged with the historic mission which Marx had entrusted to the proletariat, and which the Second International had entrusted to social democracy. As the only authentic representatives of social democracy, which itself represents the proletariat, they mistook their power for that of the working class (or the worker-peasant coalition). And now, 60 years after those days that shook the world, they still think in the same way that they thought as exiles or as *emigrés*. Lenin's fanaticism has become the orthodoxy of an empire.

Despite disagreements more apparent than real, and in any case insubstantial, the physicist and the novelist who came in from the cold concur with one another and with the French Sovietologist in their fundamental understanding of the Soviet phenomenon: the regime was

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

constructed by true bearers of the faith who collided, and are still colliding, against insurmountable forces of resistance, i.e. the nature of man and society. The socialism of which they dreamt does not exist, nor will it exist in the foreseeable future. Yet the Bolsheviks will not give up their ideology (at least for the present). In spite of Solzhenitsyn's entreaties they will not acknowledge their illusions or their errors (even if Solzhenitsyn speaks the truth: "For a long time now, everything has rested solely on material calculation and the subjection of the people, and not on any upsurge of ideological enthusiasm" [1]).

THROUGHOUT history, regimes, or if one prefers, rulers, sovereigns or privileged classes, have tended to justify themselves by invoking a principle of legitimacy. By all accounts, Marxism-Leninism constitutes this principle for the Soviet regime. It transforms the reign of the Party, or of a man inside the oligarchy, into a step towards the salvation of mankind. If the Party stopped thinking of itself as the vanguard of the proletariat, it would become the collective tyrant, the Prince who governs according to his whims and in his own interest. But the Party does not wish to be a tyrant; if it retains exclusive power, that is because that power is inseparable from the proletariat and from socialism. Party members who, in their heart of hearts, believe that the Party (or the oligarchy which runs it) is in fact a tyrant are guilty of what Alain Besançon calls "cynical deviation"; a deviation to the right which is unable to distinguish between machiavellian method, inevitable in all wars, and machiavellian philosophy.

In order to avoid this rightist deviation, the devolution of the revolutionary task to the Party is not enough; the all-powerful Party must construct socialism. What constitutes socialism? Lenin's answer would probably have been different from Brezhnev's. Indeed the latter would give no answer at all. On the other hand, both would agree on what is to be denied: private ownership of the means of production and the "commodity form," in other words, commercial exchanges and even money itself. The Bolsheviks knew nothing whatever about running a modern economy, but they were set on doing away with certain forms of organization which had been excommunicated by Marxism. Hence the clash between the Party (or the partisan state) and society at large. Hence the alternating periods of tension and relaxation which Alain Besançon describes. At times the Party or the state uses all possible means at its disposal to submit the bourgeois society to the law of this ideology; whereas at other times it allows peasants on the *kolkhozy* to cultivate their own plots of ground, or Alexander Solzhenitsyn to publish *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich.*

Today the rulers and peoples of the Eastern European states seem to fear a new phrase of tension, a renewed battle against any "survivals

[1] Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*, trans. Hilary Sternberg (Index on Censorship, London, 1974), p. 46.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of capitalism" and against an all-out return of "the classes condemned by history." Such a phase would differ completely from the War Communism which Lenin and his companions tried to put into practice. Nobody in the Kremlin wants to have to send out troops to confiscate grain from the peasants, neither do they want to do away with money. The administrators accept some market elements and even the black market. In other words, the cycles of tension and relaxation allow for orientation: the Bolsheviks remain ideologists, but are resigned to compromise with intractable reality. The sociologist [2] who in the thirties named his book on the Soviet Union *The Great Retreat* was rejoicing too soon, and had overlooked the offensive which had preceded each retreat. Still, each failed offensive had left memories in the minds of its leaders. None of them today would write *State and Revolution.*

The lessons learned from War Communism were of no help against the excesses of agrarian collectivization. Shortly after taking power, in a climate of civil war, the Bolsheviks attempted to distribute goods by officially reducing selling and buying to a minimum. Stalin probably imagined that, eight years after the first retreat, he would be able to reduce the kulaks' rate of consumption and increase the general levy on harvests in favour of the towns, whilst eliminating the differences between the rich and the poor in the countryside, between those who had something and those who had nothing. Thus he launched a state war against the peasantry, which was won, however, without the victor having attained either his economic or political objectives.

Each particular phase of War Communism or of the New Economic Policy had its own characteristics. The historian discerns a convergence of ideology and reality, starting in the first phase, symbolized by the substitution of bayonets for money, and continuing into the third phase (following the victory of 1945), symbolized by the reconstruction of the *kolkhozy* and the continued subordination of consumption to investment. This amounts to an apprenticeship in the machinery of economics for the men in the Kremlin, who are nevertheless still paralysed by psychological blockages yet to be overcome. They know how they could improve agricultural output, but they still prefer to follow the logic of their ideology rather than the logic of productivity—an attitude wrongly labelled in the West as irrational, as though any action ever follows a single logical course.

Neither War Communism nor agrarian collectivization will be repeated in the same form in the Soviet Union. Similarly, tomorrow will not bring another great purge accompanied by confession ceremonies at trials. The terror and the concentration camps were born at the same time as the rise of Leninism to power. The verbal violence with which the militant Lenin, head of the Bolshevik faction, branded as traitors those of his comrades who differed from him on points of dogma, was transmuted

[2] Nicolas S. Timasheff.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

into actual violence. " Traitors " were excluded not only from the Party but from society. The Bolshevik faction, which claimed to represent the worker-peasant coalition, was no more than a sect which aroused the hostility of the mass of the population. It was never finished with ousting traitors and pursuing enemies. Lenin, interpreter of the truths of history in Zurich, could be an object of irony; a sword in one hand and the scales of justice in the other, he inspired terror. But let us not deprive Stalin of what is his, in his own right: the great purge, the destruction of the Leninist party in order to create another, thoroughly Stalinist one.

A PAST well and truly buried? Let us not forget the limits of the present period of liberalization. There are still between a million and a million and a half internees in the camps, and from five to six thousand dissidents being " treated " in psychiatric hospitals. Compared with other periods, that of the great purge, for example, or the final years of Stalinism, the present one is one of relaxation (although compared with Khrushchev's " thaw," there is a " freeze "). But one cannot conclude from this that the Bolsheviks have made their peace with society and human nature. They could renew their assault tomorrow on the improvised citadels in which workers and intellectuals, peasants and craftsmen take refuge when the ideological and terrorist storm rages. In spite of everything, I do not see emerging from the doddering oligarchy any exceptional individual, be he cynical or naïve, who would be driven by hatred or ambition to exploits of a Leninist or Stalinist nature. Even in politics, if ever this new offensive ran wild, it would appear to be a retreat in comparison with previous phases of terror.

Whether ideocratic or logocratic, the Soviet regime has one thing in common with the despotisms of the past: its apparent immutability. Here time does not flow at quite the same speed as in democratic societies, where permanent agitation gives the (sometimes misleading) impression of rapid change. The persistence of Sovietism, the unremitting attempt to submit society to Party law, the leaders' refusal to see themselves (and their work) as they really are—despots building an empire and not socialists or liberators of the people—all this makes it impossible for Westerners to believe that they are dealing with a regime " like any other." What confronts them is not Russia, as de Gaulle professed to believe, but the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: a mighty instrument of production, a military power of the first rank, a veneer applied on a country which is still primitive in many ways by a sect which claims and believes it is building socialism. Only ideology bridges the gap between prosaic reality and the millenary vision.

In his *Letter to the Soviet Leaders* Solzhenitsyn writes in an often quoted passage: " This universal, obligatory force-feeding with lies is now the most agonizing aspect of existence in our country—worse than all our material miseries, worse than any lack of civil liberties." [3] Perhaps

[3] op. cit. p. 47.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at the risk of being pedantic, I feel it would be appropriate to follow Alain Besançon's lead by outlining a typology of these lies. Strictly speaking, a liar is a person who consciously says the opposite of the truth: Lenin's companions lied when they confessed to crimes they had not committed; Soviet propaganda lied when it celebrated the people's happiness during the period of agrarian collectivization; Trotsky was not an agent of the Gestapo, and neither was Tukhachevsky.

On the other hand, when the Bolsheviks there and the communists here call the Soviet regime "socialist," should one say that they are lying? It all depends on how you define socialism. If socialism implies individual liberty and equal rewards for all, then the Bolsheviks and the communists are certainly lying. If they acknowledge the gulf between what socialism as an idea can be and what socialism actually is, then, strictly speaking, they are not lying. They are merely substituting for reality what Alain Besançon calls "surreality," a new dimension resulting from their idea of a future conforming to ideology. For them, in spite of everything, Sovietism signifies a step on the road towards socialism, and thus a step towards the salvation of the human race.

How can one refute this interpretation (in the sense of grasping a meaning)? It is rather a question of evaluating, plausibly, if not scientifically, the connecting link between collective ownership and a planned economy on the one hand, and human values and socialism on the other. Critics of capitalism in Western intellectual circles have been responsible for the popular preconception that moral virtue is inherent in collective ownership and a planned economy, since private property and private enterprise are indivisible from the sin of capitalism. However, historical experience suggests that, far from being connected by natural laws, economic practice and socialist ideals are simply incompatible. Unfortunately only the sceptic or the rationalist prefers experience to faith.

I am reminded of the outburst by the President of the Council of the Fourth Republic during a congress: "They tell us our policies have failed. Is that any reason to renounce them?" The Bolsheviks have adhered to this maxim for over half a century. Guy Mollet provoked laughter; but Stalin did not, neither did Khrushchev, nor does Brezhnev. With regard to their ideological aims, the Bolsheviks' policies have failed. Does the number of army divisions and intercontinental missiles counterbalance this failure? Anyway, it is no laughing matter.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Conversation with Domenico Settembrini

Mussolini and Lenin*

George R. Urban

Urban—One of the least known and least advertised aspects of the interplay between communism and fascism is their shared roots and, in some important respects, parallel developments. From the communist point of view, this is a delicate matter—the Italian Left's reaction to the work of Renzo de Felice has given ample evidence of their sensitivity, and of the undiminished importance, as a force in current politics, of both fascism and the study of fascism. Why should this be so more than three decades after the collapse of fascism?

Settembrini—The common matrix of Italian fascism and Italian communism is pre-1914 Italian socialism, and the common denominator between the two leading Marxist revolutionaries of the time—Mussolini and Lenin—was their hatred for the betrayal, as they saw it, of the revolutionary message of socialism by social democrats. Remember that the majority of pre-1914 socialists were moderates who believed in improving the working man's lot by trade unionism and gradual reform and adapting the movement to the rules of parliamentary democracy. But this was not what Mussolini and Lenin understood by socialism; this, for them, was selling out to the bourgeoisie. *Their* purpose was to destroy it. Italian fascism and Italian communism both set out to confound the official theoreticians of revolutionary socialism who, while paying a great deal of lip service to revolution, seemed as incapable of putting it into action as they were rightly suspected of being unwilling to do so. The remarkable thing is that Mussolini and Lenin shared this contempt for the official socialism of their day and set about imposing on it a revolutionary programme without any knowledge of what the other was doing. Some students of the period insist, and I would agree with them, that between 1910 and 1914 Mussolini was in many respects the more radical revolutionary of the two. Indeed Professor Ernst Nolte asserts, rightly as I see it, that Mussolini was the first historically significant European communist.

Lenin's *What is to be done?*, in which he outlined the need for a disciplined, elitist, conspiratorial party organization in order to provide a sluggish proletariat with determined leadership has, at least in the formal sense, its analogue in Mussolini's personal magazine *Utopia*, in which he articulated his dissent from Italian official socialism.

Why did Mussolini need a separate mouthpiece? Because, as editor

* This article which is included in G. R. Urban (ed.), *Eurocommunism* (Maurice Temple Smith, London, 1978), originated in a broadcast of Radio Free Europe, whose cooperation we gratefully acknowledge.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of *Avanti*, he was confined to representing the approved line of revolutionary socialism, while privately he began to realize that the facts of Italian society were rendering these canons obsolete: the reality was that Italian democracy was a going concern, that the living standards and social conditions of the masses were improving, and as a consequence of these, the spirit of revolution was sagging and, in fact, disappearing. None of this could be stated officially, for any admission that—contrary to dogma—the pauperization of the proletariat was a non-fact and capitalism was improving the social conditions of the entire population would have robbed socialism of its historical legitimacy.

Now Lenin, too, could see that the pauperization of the proletariat had come to an end, and with it any hope that the masses would propel themselves into revolution had to be discounted. But whereas Lenin was working on a country which had experienced no renaissance, no reformation, and no bourgeois revolution and was therefore ripe, as he rightly thought, for the imposition of revolution by a small band of self-appointed revolutionaries, Mussolini on the other hand was active in a land where the bourgeois democratic revolution had in the main been accomplished and where following the Marxist doctrine to the letter would have meant relegating himself to the spectator's enclosure of history. The publication of *Utopia* was a symbol of these realizations. Mussolini now used anarchists as his collaborators and, without repudiating Marxism, he nevertheless questioned some of its accepted interpretations. He tried to return to the voluntaristic views of the Marx of 1848, while Lenin, working as he did in an entirely different social context, insisted on the doctrines of orthodox Marxism.

Urban—Whether Lenin's programme in *What is to be done?* is orthodox Marxism is rather open to question. I would have thought Lenin protests his orthodoxy but, in fact, the idea of a rigorously disciplined and centrally organized party pushing the cart of history in a direction in which it would not go of its own momentum, as Marx predicted, was the negation of Marx's central doctrine. So, to a lesser extent, was Lenin's notion of injecting into the consciousness of a backward and self-seeking proletariat the will to revolution and power. As Leonard Schapiro put it:

> Lenin probably realized [in *What is to be done?*] . . . that the theories of Marx and Engels in their pure form do not lead to revolution. The logical issue of the analysis which Marx and Engels produced is simply that society develops along a predetermined path and there is no room for upheavals. In other words, revisionism as portrayed by Bernstein is built into the system, as it were. And indeed there is a passage in Engels where he says that there is an inherent contradiction in " our theory," for if the proletariat becomes class conscious enough to make a revolution then it is not necessary for it to make a revolution: if it does not

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

become class conscious enough to make a revolution, then it would be disastrous if it did.

Settembrini—The idea of bringing revolution to the proletariat from outside the proletariat comes from Kautsky, but there are also indications in *The Holy Family* that Marx was, in 1845, not completely confident that the proletariat would be able automatically to recognize its class interests. He was intimating that, more important than what the proletariat *is* and thinks, is what the proletariat must do. In *What is to be done?* Lenin was certainly forcing Marx's views. The theory of a Leninist party is a mere possibility in Marx which Marx would have repudiated if his socio-economic theory had been confirmed by facts, and which he did in fact repudiate when he maintained that his theory was being confirmed by reality. We must remember that at an earlier period in his life Marx was a Jacobin. In 1902 Lenin realized that the facts did not tally with the central doctrine of Marx's mature theory—that the conciousness of the working class alone would produce no revolution, certainly not in backward, agrarian Russia. Hence he returned to the Jacobin Marx of 1845 and wrote his blueprint for the practical realization of revolution in Russia—theory or no theory.

Lenin, unlike Mussolini, could not openly repudiate Marxism—he needed Marxism for the legitimation of revolution; Mussolini, on the other hand, had no choice but to subject it to a fundamental critique. In Italy, unlike Russia, the bourgeois revolution had been accomplished, and the official Marxism of the Socialist Party led by Turati was a highly conservative force from which Mussolini could not hope to elicit a revolutionary response.

So where did Mussolini look for his inspiration? He looked for and found some of his answers in nineteenth-century idealism which arrived with a great and sudden impact in Italian culture at the turn of the century. This idealism, and it was of course, principally German idealism, brought with it a useful message. It said that each nation, each state, each class and each race carries a *telos* of its own—that they are sovereign entities which have a higher claim to realization than the individual. The individual is there to serve as a building stone in a large edifice, but his inherent worth hinges entirely upon his usefulness in the design of the state, nation or class.

Urban—It would be hard to think of a single passage which more accurately prefigures the law-sanctioned lawlessness of the twentieth century than Hegel's observation: "Moral claims that are irrelevant must not be brought into collision with world-historical deeds and their accomplishment. The Litany of private virtues . . . must not be raised against them. The History of the World might . . . entirely ignore the circle within which . . . the . . . distinction between the moral and the politic lies."

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Settembrini—The practical implications of this Hegelian notion had symmetrical consequences on the Left and Right. On the Right it was interpreted as a call for the sacrifice of the individual on the altar of the nation, while on the Left on that of class and socialism. In either case, liberal democracy was the common enemy, and it is this shared hostility to democracy and its institutions that provides the link between the pre-1914 revolutionaries—both Marxists and anarcho-syndicalists—on the one hand, and the post-1914 communists and fascists on the other.

The idea that in the state, the nation, or the revolution resides some virtue which can rightfully claim to override the interests of individuals because it bodies forth some *Geist* or inner purpose of its own is, of course, at least as old as the French Revolution. Robespierre is said to have confronted a mob clamouring for more bread and cheaper living conditions with the warning: "But will you ever learn to concern yourselves with something more elevated than fodder for your bellies?" or words to that effect. Lenin's contempt for trade unionism and mere "economism," and Mussolini's similar contempt for the mob which expects to be and enjoys being dictated to stem from the same sentiment. Both believed and said that the proletariat is too short-sighted, too immersed in the gratification of pedestrian needs, and too uneducated to see the larger historic framework which it is their duty to fill with significant but pre-ordained action. Hence the duty of bringing the proletariat's submerged consciousness to the surface falls to a group of organized individuals who articulate the laws of history in the name of the proletariat. Mussolini and Lenin enforced this interpretation of nineteenth-century idealism, each in his own way, with great and awesome consequences.

Urban—Mussolini, to do him justice, was always prepared to acknowledge his debt. Both in the Chamber of Deputies, and talking to his biographers, he frequently underlined the psychological and systemic affinities between fascism and Soviet communism. For example, in his conversation with Emil Ludwig, in 1932, the following exchange took place:

> [Ludwig] "Before the war . . . you once wrote in *Avanti*: 'Socialism is not an Arcadian and peaceful affair. We do not believe in the sacredness of human life.' Is not that fascism?"
> "Yes, it is the same thing."
> "You have also written: 'Unless fascism were a faith, how could it arouse the fire of enthusiasm?' Is not that communism?"
> He nodded assent, saying: "Such affinities do not trouble me."
> "It follows then, does it not, that the faith which both you and the Russians demand and find distinguishes your respective systems from all others?"
> "Yes," he said, "and more than that. In negative matters as well we are like one another; both we and the Russians are opposed to the liberals, to the democrats, to parliament."

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

An even more significant episode occurred in the wake of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, which the Italians disliked intensely and which Mussolini was at a loss how to serve up to his Party. Ciano records on 16 October 1939: "The Duce was very much affected by certain documents and information on Russia which have come into our possession, and wants to begin a press campaign to explain to the Italians that Bolshevism is dead and that in its place is a kind of Slavic Fascism." How right he was. And how very revealing of his mentality that he thought Stalin's Russia could be convincingly presented to the Italian people as a form of Slavic fascism!

Settembrini—Yes—one could list a whole series of similarities, part-similarities, divergencies and returns to a parallel course in the history of the two movements. Let me look at the question of "interventionism."

Mussolini as a revolutionary syndicalist of the Sorelian school, and Lenin as a revolutionary Marxist, both realized that syndicalism—that is, trade unionism—does not produce revolutions. The masses have to be led to revolution, and that requires a party. Quite independently from each other, the two men drew up plans for an elite leadership to propel the masses into revolution and to guide it. But while they realized that the party could be instrumental in radicalizing the masses and shaping their responses, it could not, on its own, create the basic precondition for revolution—the collapse of the capitalist social order. Whatever Marx had said about the spirit of revolution automatically emerging from the impoverishment of the proletariat and the consequent inability of capitalism to sell its goods to a shrinking market, the fact was that the proletariat was not getting poorer, that the spirit of revolution was conspicuous by its absence, and the capitalist order was expanding rather than facing bankruptcy. A substitute had, therefore, to be found for Marx's supposed self-triggering mechanism, and that substitute was—war.

Mussolini, after the fiasco of Red Week in 1914, was very conscious—and I would say he was more conscious than Lenin—of the limitations on what any combination of political and industrial action could achieve in stirring up revolution in a serious but not universal crisis. He realized that without the armed forces joining an uprising, no revolution could, in fact, take off. Hence he retreats in good time without completely compromising himself, and draws a conclusion which we might today paraphrase in the Maoist tag: "Revolution grows out of the barrel of a gun." Here again, Mussolini is close to Lenin's thinking. A year before Red Week, at the time of the second Balkan War, Lenin wrote to Gorky: "It is much to be hoped that the war degenerates into a European war. This would certainly promote revolution, but we cannot expect that Nicholas or Franz Joseph will do us that favour."

Lenin's language is significant, for it amounts to the admission

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that neither socialists acting on orthodox Marxism, nor those acting on its voluntaristic interpretation were capable of actually propelling Europe into revolution: both found themselves constrained to wait upon the whims of the Autocrat and the Emperor, hoping but not expecting that they would present the revolutionaries with the coveted opportunity of war.

The Tsar did Lenin the favour he was hoping for—Nicholas was among the first to enter the war, but the Italian government denied Mussolini a similar favour and decided on neutrality—in good part at Mussolini's own behest, because throughout the summer of 1914 Mussolini himself was a determined advocate of neutrality on the then universally accepted socialist principle that the refusal of the proletariat to be cannon-fodder in the predatory wars of capitalism constituted the strongest proof of the international solidarity of the working class—a principle on which the German, French and Belgian socialists were soon to disappoint him.

Urban—Indeed one remembers nationalism asserting itself in the heart of that doyen of international socialism, G. V. Plekhanov. In August 1914 he summoned Angelica Balabanoff to Geneva to enquire of her what her and the Italian Socialist Party's attitude was to the war. The question amazed her, and she answered that the Italian socialists would, of course, do their utmost to prevent Italy from entering the imperialist slaughter. Wasn't that (she argued) what he, Plekhanov, had taught countless Marxists, including Angelica Balabanoff herself, who had sat at his feet as admiring students at the People's House in Brussels? Plekhanov was (as we know from Balabanoff's memoirs) visibly angered by her reply. "So you would prevent Italy from entering the war," he asked. "Where is your love of Russia? . . . so far as I am concerned, if I were not old and sick, I would join the army. To bayonet your German comrades would give me great pleasure."

Settembrini—Yes, and Mussolini was to follow a similar course. The slogan of "absolute neutrality" of July 1914 gave way to "active neutrality" by September, and soon Mussolini found himself in the grips of a psychological tug of war between his patriotism as an Italian and his revolutionary hopes as a socialist activist. Between July and November 1914 he underwent a remarkable change of heart from militant neutralism, on the principle that war and socialism were "antithetical and irreconcilable," to interventionism under the slogan: "Today it is war, it will be revolution tomorrow!" "Our intervention," he wrote in 1915, "has a double purpose—national and international. By a singular historic circumstance our national war may help towards the realization of vaster aims of an international order. *Our* war, I say, and not the war which the governing classes of Italy may be preparing." And he went on to say that the war would bring about the downfall of that bulwark of reactionary Europe,

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Austria-Hungary, and perhaps lead to a revolution in Germany and Russia, contributing a great step forward in the cause of liberty.

Now Lenin's attitude to the war was in many ways strikingly similar. The 1907 resolution of the International Socialist Congress said that the socialist parties had decided "to exert every effort to prevent the outbreak of war." But "should war break out none the less," the duty of socialists would be to exploit the resulting crisis in order to "rouse the peoples and thereby to hasten the abolition of capitalist class rule." The intention of Jaurès and Rosa Luxemburg in putting forward this resolution was to serve notice on bourgeois governments that the wages of war would be revolution. But when, in 1915, it looked as though the war might end in a peace, without victors, without vanquished, without defeat or revolution, no one agreed more wholeheartedly with Mussolini than Lenin in treating the pacifists as rabble and in wanting the war to continue to the bitter end for fear that otherwise "the incipient revolutionary ferment," as Lenin wrote to Wijnkoop, "would be suffocated by an idiotic 'peace programme'."

Urban—How did Gramsci look upon Mussolini's volte-face?

Settembrini—Gramsci was entirely behind Mussolini's interventionism. Why? The revolutionary socialists had believed and expected all along that the capitalist system would succumb, and succumb soon, to its internal contradictions. This is what Marx said, but this was precisely what was not happening. Along then came an unexpected windfall—war—which bade fair to blow up the capitalist system more surely and more swiftly than one could expect from the laborious workings of the Marxist dialectic. When this was realized by Mussolini and Gramsci, both concluded that continuing to endorse Italian neutrality, as the Socialists led by Turati were still doing, was betraying the hope of revolution. Gramsci therefore fully supported Mussolini's volte-face. He wrote in *Il Grido del Popolo* that it was now absolutely necessary to free "the Socialist Party from all the bourgeois incrustations which fear of war had fastened on to it"—the only way open to anyone who did not want "the proletariat to stand by as an impartial spectator of events." The gulf between Mussolini and Gramsci did not become unbridgeable until October 1917, when the sweeping events in Russia appeared to Gramsci to promise a better prospect for revolution than "interventionism," which had involved him in awkward concessions to nationalism and inter-class solidarity. But Gramsci, who shared Mussolini's cultural background—Bergson, Sorel, idealism and voluntarism—was quick to recognize that Lenin's programme, like Mussolini's after 1915, was a voluntaristic affair and a negation of Marxism. On 24 December 1917 Gramsci saluted the Bolshevik revolution in a memorable article in *Avanti* as "the revolution against *Kapital*": "The Bolsheviks reject Karl Marx,

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and they affirm with the testimony of action . . . that the laws of historical materialism are not such iron laws as might be thought and has been thought. . . ."

It is one of the less known curiosities of Gramsci's place in communist history that his support of Mussolini's interventionism set him gravely at odds with the Socialist Party, so much so that when the Italian Communist Party set up house at its Livorno congress in 1921, Gramsci was not among the speakers, because for many of the delegates his name had become a symbol of interventionism—a fact which has, until quite recently, been tactfully neglected by the Italian communists.

* * * * *

Urban—Didn't Gramsci feel it necessary to resolve or to obfuscate the contradiction in Leninism between Lenin's show of loyalty to Marx's "laws" of history, and Lenin's own free-booting revolutionary activism?

Settembrini—He did, and he did so using a revealing analogy. On 12 January 1918 he wrote: "Before Marx, Giambattista Vico said that faith in divine providence worked positively in history, acting as a stimulus to conscious action. Therefore faith in determinism could have the same effect for Lenin in Russia and elsewhere for others." This is an important articulation in its own right for it reconciles Marx with Lenin—at any rate to Gramsci's satisfaction; but it also underlines a point I have already made, namely that Lenin could, despite his practical non-Marxism, keep faith with Marxism on the theoretical grounds which Gramsci indicated. Mussolini, on the other hand, could not. He had to break with the Marxist-determinist tradition, and so had his disciples, even those who became communists. Their reason for doing so was very simple: in Italy the Marxist tradition was the property of the official socialists. These, of course, were evolutionists and thus opposed to revolution.

Urban—This is perhaps where Bergson and Sorel come clearly into Mussolini's politics.

Settembrini—Sorel more than Bergson, for Sorel made no bones about stating that the collapse of capitalism as diagnosed by Marx in *Das Kapital* was a myth. He did, however, also say that if the masses believed in the collapse of capitalism, they would make it come true. Here again is the link with Mussolini.

But, to return to 1915, Mussolini's decision to demand intervention invalidates any further parallel with Lenin's attitude to the war. Mussolini's interventionism was repudiated by the majority of Italian socialists. His career was now forced on to a new trajectory which was to carry him far away from the Socialist Party, though not, as

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he saw it, from socialism. Lenin, too, was momentarily isolated from the party through his theses on "revolutionary defeatism." But because Russia, unlike Italy, was defeated in the war, and because Lenin's theses were close to the traditions of the Zimmerwald programme, and not least because of Lenin's enormous prestige and powers of persuasion, Lenin's position and that of the Party eventually converged again, while Mussolini, who was also anxious for reconciliation with his Party, was unable to bring it about. By 1919 Mussolini was completely isolated and determined to start a new venture. As the Socialist Party's conservatism prevented him from leading the working class to revolution, he now decided to try what, in fact, turned out to be the fascist alternative.

Urban—One might, I think, mistakenly infer from your analogy that Mussolini did approve of the Bolshevik revolution as a model Italy might follow. But this was not so. From the very beginnings of the "Fasci" in 1919, Mussolini rejected the Bolshevik example (particularly after the demonstrations in Milan by the Leninist faction of the Socialist Party), and he rejected it on conservative grounds, using a language that strikes one today as distinctly libertarian. ". . . the masses . . . need a hero," he wrote in *Il Popolo d'Italia* in 1919,

> they must have someone to believe in. For the old idols they must set up new ones. But we, as individualists, cannot bow down before the new gods. We cannot fail to criticize the creed of the new revelation and to refuse to bow before the Russian icons which the populace now adore . . . We believe in the conservative instinct which holds by western civilization, which clings to the rights of the individual, which upholds his freedom, freedom of the mind which does not live by head alone, freedom which can no more be crushed by the dictators from Russia than it was by the dictators of Prussian militarism.

At this juncture, as Margherita Sarfatti reminds us, the *Popolo* changed its subtitle from the *The Socialist Daily* to *Journal of the Fighters and Producers*—and one can see why.

Settembrini—Mussolini realized that, although Italy had formally won the war, she had also lost it. The devastation in human lives and the disorganization of the country were extreme. But he also knew that the socialist hope of founding a communist republic on these ruins was unrealistic. The institutions of the state were intact: the monarchy was respected, the army was strong, and capitalism was in its place. And although (as I have said) he would have liked to lead the working class to revolution, he was, by 1919, convinced that the Russian model was inappplicable and that his revolution would somehow have to be held within the framework of existing institutions. But the libertarian sentiments you have quoted were merely tactical. Not many years later, in 1924, he preached the opposite: "Fascism

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

throws the noxious theories of so-called Liberalism upon the rubbish heap. . . . It has already stepped, and, if need be, will quietly turn round to step once more, over the more or less putrid body of the Goddess Liberty."

We must surely not be surprised by the tergiversations of politicians: Mussolini saw the Bolsheviks mount a demonstration on what he considered to be *his* beat in Milan—and he was against it; hence his protestations of individual liberty. But as soon as he was in power, he consigned liberty to the " rubbish heap " of history.

Urban—One is not surprised; the lies and low cunning of politicians can border on the sublime. One could indeed think of many more examples confirming the aptness of your parallel with Lenin. Sticking to mendacity, at the time of the Provisional Government, Lenin proclaimed: " Our Party alone, by taking power, will assure the convocation of the Constituent Assembly." But when the elections of 25 November 1917 gave the Bolsheviks only 175 seats out of 707—the great majority going to moderate socialist parties—Lenin changed his mind. The Assembly met on 18 January 1918, and as it refused to do the will of the Bolshevik minority, Lenin had it disbanded. It lasted 24 hours. It took Lenin one single day to frustrate the hopes of generations and wipe out the results of Russia's first, and, so far, last, genuinely free elections.

Mussolini's behaviour at the time under review is confusing if one is not familiar with his fiercely combative spirit and his affinity and friendship with those curious evangelists of Italian aestheticism—the " Futurists." Quite apart from political considerations, Mussolini was informed by a strong feeling (and he was, at the time, far from being alone in entertaining it) that the union of the obscure, indigestible principles of Hegel, Marx and Engels, and the equally dark and Byzantine traditions of Russia produced a singularly unappealing offspring in Bolshevism. I am myself inclined to find the psychological clue to Mussolini's attitude to Bolshevism in his observation (in 1919): " Bolshevism will never flourish in Italy, never, never! With this sunshine, it can never take root in our country . . . ! " Mussolini was decidedly a " Eurofascist " (or Eurocommunist?), with Buonarotti, Babeuf, Proudhon and Sorel as his apostles, and the aesthetics of Ruskin and William Morris as his guides for the future. Today he would feel more at home with Berlinguer and Carillo than with the ageing mandarinate in the Kremlin.

But, to take you back one step again, I am intrigued by the discrepancy between the myth of Gramsci currently put about by the Italian Communist Party, and the picture of Gramsci emerging from your account of his relationship with Mussolini.

Settembrini—Before I comment on that I should, I think, point to the

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

close intellectual and ideological affinities in Mussolini's, Gramsci's and Bordiga's thinking, and I propose to do so by simply putting certain quotations side by side with one another and letting you draw your own conclusions. The first caption under my Mussolini-Gramsci diptych is: "The destruction of democracy by determined elites."

Here, then, is Mussolini writing in February 1913:

> We must choose between democracy and socialism. The struggle in human society has been and always will be a struggle of minorities. To aspire quantitatively to an absolute majority is absurd. One will never be able to incorporate the majority of the proletariat . . . in economic and political organizations. The class struggle is essentially a struggle of minorities. The majority follows and obeys. Violence, as Marx says, is the midwife of society. Do you want to avoid socialism? Then take away the violence.

And in April 1913, dealing with the question of what constitutes "common sense," Mussolini said:

> Common sense is conservatism. And listen, Socialists, common sense is the philosophy of the class in power. Revolutions are mad, violent, and bestial. They kill, destroy and sack. They are a cataclysm of men, and this is their beauty. Compare a page of Marx with a page of Bonomi or Turati. You will see the abyss. Common sense is an insidious voice, he who listens to it will never be courageous. . . . Men must go beyond the limits of their physical and moral possibilities and challenge the unknown and die if necessary.

This was one of my two pictures. Now here is Gramsci, a disciple and admirer of Mussolini, writing in February 1917:

> It has been said that socialism is dead because the image of society the socialists have been creating was no more than a myth to deceive the masses. I, too, believe that the myth has collapsed, but its dissolution was necessary. The historic law, the pre-ordained course of events, have been replaced by the determined will of man. One's soul must burn red-hot and throw off thousands of sparks. To wait . . . for the majority is the way of the cowardly spirits. They alone will wait for the donation of socialism by royal decree, signed by two ministers.

Finally, here is another veteran communist, Bordiga, writing in 1924 shortly before the assassination of Matteotti:

> Democracy has run its course. The liberal geese will cry a different song when they see how a real revolution deals with democracy. Instead of restoring the ideas which Amendola, Turati and others of the same ilk babble about, the revolution of the proletarian masses . . . will treat them to a merry-go-round of kicks in the ass of holy democracy. And this alone will deserve to be called liberation.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(Amadeo Livorsi, Bordiga's communist biographer, writing in 1976, refers to this quotation as expressing an "agreeably desecrating" view. Desecrating of what? Representative democracy, of course.)

One can see why, after the murder of Matteotti, the Italian public was reluctant to unseat Mussolini, for Mussolini's fall would have aligned them with the communists, whose contempt for democracy was at least as rife as Mussolini's and, going by the evidence of the Bolshevik revolution, much more savage and irreversible.

Urban—What you are saying is that "Mussoliniism" and "Leninism" are comparable deviations from Marxist socialism. But you are implying more than that. I would infer from your reasoning that the fascist movement in its first phase is, in your reading, the Italian version of Leninism, and Mussolini the Latin Lenin.

Settembrini—That is what I'm saying. Both saw the sterility of Marxist dogma and the uselessness of Marxist prognostications. We have already examined the reasons that led them to these conclusions: the solidarity of the international working class was a figment of the International's imagination; revolution was not on the march, and capitalism was not collapsing.

Urban—Both were good revisionists in the sense of Bernstein: "Peasants do not sink" (as he put in a famous note scribbled on the back of an envelope); "the middle class does not disappear; crises do not grow ever larger; misery and serfdom do not increase."

Settembrini—Yes, for both men loyalty to the doctrine meant the death of the movement, and as both Mussolini and Lenin were activists and firebrands, their escape from the dead end of Marxist dogma followed a similar route. Both knew in their bones that, Marx or no Marx, history was the story of the will-power of strong men. The masses were passive, waiting to be led and relieved of the dilemmas of the freedom of choice.

Now if such are your assumptions, your next step is to incorporate these ideas in a rigorously centralized small party and eventually to place all power in the hands of one man—your own. Thus was totalitarianism born in the Soviet Union and in a milder form in Italy. Mussolini wants power, but once he is in the possession of power he is more or less happy to let things go the way they have always gone. He is a dictator, but his totalitarianism is incomplete. His rise to dictatorship is not over the ruins of the existing social order—he has to learn to live with the Monarchy, the Church and the institutions of capitalism. Lenin, by contrast, has removed all these impediments. His totalitarianism is merciless and complete. I have no intention of whitewashing fascism when I say that of the two fascism was incomparably the smaller evil. Why? Because Mussolini never set out to

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

change the nature of man, whereas Lenin believed, and the Soviet Leninists have never ceased to believe, that the radical change of society requires the radical change of human beings. This is an open-ended and lethal doctrine which implies and has provided legitimation for the most monstrous crimes that have yet been perpetrated in history in the name of freedom.

Urban—Mussolini's attitude to race, at a time when Hitler was about to seize power in Germany (1932), confirms what you say. Not only had Mussolini no ambition to create "fascist" man on the analogy of "Soviet man," but he was also entirely unselfconscious about race as an attribute of Italianness. "Race!" he said on one occasion, "It is a feeling, not reality; 95 per cent of it at least, is a feeling. Nothing will ever make me believe that biologically pure races can be shown to exist today. No such doctrine will ever find acceptance here in Italy. National pride has no need of the delirium of race." Mussolini's official biographer and long-time political associate, Margherita Sarfatti, was a Jewess. So was his early friend and mentor, Angelica Balabanoff. Aldo Finzi was a member of his first cabinet, and Guido Jung was his finance minister for many years—both Jews. There were many Jews present at the foundation of the Fascist Party in 1919. In 1941 Mussolini said he "could never forget that four of the seven founders of Italian nationalism were Jews." During the war he interceded with Hitler on behalf of Bergson. None of this, however, prevented him from eventually delivering the Italian Jews to the Nazis.

Settembrini—There has never been any question in my mind that the proper analogy is between Mussoliniism and Leninism and not between fascism and Nazism. But, if we want to be historically accurate, we must keep reminding ourselves of the limits of this analogy. In 1918 Mussolini realized that capitalism was far from being a spent force—indeed, to it, he thought, belonged the future. He therefore completely abandoned any idea of overthrowing it in his lifetime. That in itself was enough to set him on a road that could never lead to complete totalitarianism. Think of the reasons that made Stalin abandon the NEP experiment and collectivize agriculture: he was aware that NEP allowed the peasants and small traders to accumulate a certain wealth and gain a modicum of independence that goes with property. Such people could not be controlled. A capitalist social order, even one based on a mixed economy, is a safeguard against totalitarian regimes. One can have under capitalism a ferocious dictatorship, but not a completely totalitarian system. Mussolini understood this. He would gladly have done without the monarchy and the Church, but he was convinced that capitalism was there to stay. Before the March on Rome, that is, before the failure of the attempt to find a *modus vivendi* between fascism and socialism in 1921, it was still possible for Mussolini to become the leader of a radical reformist

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

movement. From his writings of 1920–21 it is very clear that he was anxious to win the socialists over to his position and gain their respect and support, and that he resented not being able to do so. He used threats of violence in the hope that the socialists would yield. He tried to set the pro-Soviet faction, which he thought he could not win over, against the centre Right which he thought he could, and he repeatedly tried to draw Turati into government. When Turati was eventually persuaded that it was necessary for the socialists to join the government in order to use the power of the state to defeat Mussolini's incipient fascism, Mussolini threatened: "Don't think you'll find it easy to destroy us. We will not shrink from allying ourselves even with the communists in order to defend ourselves against you." By 1921 Mussolini was convinced that he could take power only over the dead body of the Socialist Party. Yet, even after the break with the socialists in 1921, he still hoped to come to terms with the Confederazione Generale del Lavoro, the trade union federation controlled by the socialists and communists.

Urban—But to return to the similarities, didn't Togliatti himself recognize a certain parallel between Mussolini's and Lenin's efforts to get their organization right?

Settembrini—From a fairly early date, Togliatti differed from the Communist International's interpretation of fascism by saying that fascism was born of the alliance of socialists and syndicalists on a democratic platform, and that it was in no way *destined* to become totalitarian. Togliatti asserted that even after the March on Rome it was not inevitable that fascism should become a dictatorship, and he suggested that part of the blame for its degeneration into dictatorship had to be borne by the erroneous policies of the socialist and communist movements. But—and this comes closer to your question—Togliatti recognized a certain (as he thought) creative innovation in the manner in which Mussolini—like Lenin—organized his party.

After the assassination of Matteotti, Mussolini's choice was either that of trying to survive in the existing democratic framework and risk being defeated by the anti-fascist forces (and the risk of that was very great indeed), or that of becoming a captive of the violent fascist *squadristi* whom the party had inherited from revolutionary socialism and syndicalism. He chose neither; he chose dictatorship. Writing in 1935, Togliatti observed that there was an analogy between the Leninist party and the party that was now created by Mussolini:

> We have stressed that a characteristic element is the absence of any form of internal democracy. . . . For this reason Mussolini's claim, borrowed from Lenin, to have created a new party has some justification. This element of liquidation of every form of democracy, of adapting the party to the forms of dictatorship, certainly gives some new features to the party.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The analogy goes, in fact, much deeper than Togliatti would concede. In 1921, before instituting NEP, Lenin abolished all internal party democracy to avoid being attacked by his Left who saw in NEP a concession to capitalism and were bitterly opposed to it, just as the fascist Left, after 1924, considered Mussolini's reconciliation with the state and the monarchy as the betrayal of the revolutionary programme of fascism.

For the student of fascist history, Togliatti's recognition that fascism and Leninism are in some respects near-identical twins is nothing very new. Togliatti was, in fact, simply endorsing Mussolini's statement to the Chamber of Deputies in December 1921:

> I recognize that between us and the communists there are no political affinities, but there are intellectual affinities. We, like you, consider necessary a centralized and unitary state; with this difference, that you arrive at this conclusion via the concept of class, and we arrive there via the concept of nation.

* * * * *

Urban—In 1921 it was perhaps too early to say whether the affinities were, in fact, only intellectual—in any case, I doubt whether political affinities can be divorced from intellectual ones. Also, in 1921, Mussolini's whole programme rested on his denial that political affinities with communism did or could survive. Yet the continuing two-way traffic between fascist and communist politicians (and we have discussed this in some detail with Renzo de Felice in "Varieties of Fascism") shows that they could and did. Let me borrow, from one of your own essays, the celebrated example of the communist, but formerly fascist, historian, Delio Cantimori. He described the revolutionary hopes which had led him to fascism in these words:

> I entered the fascist party in 1926. I was in a state of mental confusion and had really no excuse for it. In fact I had read Gobetti's *Rivoluzione liberale* . . . and Salvemini's *l'Unità*. . . . But I was convinced that fascism had carried out the true Italian revolution and was still doing so, and that it should become a European revolution; and I believe one had to work along those lines.

Settembrini—Yes, and the wisdom of Togliatti was to perceive that the intellectual impulse that leads a man with revolutionary sentiments into the Fascist Party can also lead him out of it and into the Communist Party; as indeed it often did. The intolerance and sectarianism which have governed so much of Italian culture since the Second World War can be explained in no other way. The same mentality predominates—only the shop signs have been changed.

Cantimori's was, of course, only one of many similar cases. Throughout Mussolini's rule, the voices of "socialism betrayed" were never completely silent in the Fascist Party and, indeed, in Mussolini's

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

personal surroundings. For example, Ruggero Zangrandi, a close friend of Mussolini's son, Victor Mussolini, retails some highly revealing facts about the political sentiments in the Duce's own family. He tells us in his memoirs that according to Victor Mussolini one of the constant topics of conversation in Mussolini's home was the disappointed expectations of revolutionary fascism, and that almost all those fascist "dissidents" who maintained political ambitions later joined the Communist Party and often rose to important positions, especially in the cultural field. Mussolini himself was in touch with the left wing of his movement, mainly through Ugo Spirito, but in the 1930s he also encouraged Victor Mussolini to run what might be called an "opposition" newspaper in order to create a focus for the young fascist left-radicals.

Urban—In March 1942 there was a "super-fascist" insurrectional movement at some Italian universities which—so Ciano tells us—set out "to eliminate all rightist or conservative elements in the party, and to impose on the Duce a violent socialistic policy." That in 1942 the Duce was still thought capable by these students of heading a socialist renewal of fascism is remarkable.

Settembrini—On a different level there is the celebrated case of Angelica Balabanoff (and we have already referred to her) who was Mussolini's friend, assistant, admirer and reputedly also his mistress at the beginning of his career as a socialist in Switzerland—

Urban—and, according to rumour, mentioned but denied by Edda Ciano-Mussolini, she was also Edda Mussolini's mother—

Settembrini—yes, but in this case I tend to believe with Edda Mussolini that the rumour was false. In any case, here is Angelica Balabanoff—a devout revolutionary who follows Mussolini to Italy, assists him in editing *Avanti,* is eventually expelled from the Italian Socialist Party, becomes an enthusiastic supporter of the Bolshevik revolution, joins Lenin's immediate circle and is made Secretary of the newly formed Third International. She then becomes disillusioned again, this time by Lenin's and Zinoviev's duplicity and callousness, and returns, after the Second World War, to Italy to join Saragat as a Social Democrat. Her *Impressions of Lenin* are the finest testimony of the inescapable clash between two socialist temperaments: Angelica's, who really believed in serving the people, and Lenin's who believed only in manipulating the people.

Urban—The fact that this highly sensitive, intelligent and idealistic woman found it entirely possible to switch her loyalties from the socialism of Mussolini to the socialism of Lenin tells us a good deal about the close affinity between fascism and Bolshevism, at least in

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the early stages of the two movements. In the end, Angelica Balabanoff regarded both Mussolini and Lenin as renegades of socialism. Her memoirs of Mussolini appeared under the title *The Traitor: Mussolini's Rise to Power,* and of the betrayal of the hopes of revolution by Lenin she wrote:

> When those who under Tsarism had fought against infringement upon liberty began themselves to violate freedom, when independent thinkers were persecuted by the Bolshevik government and the prisons filled with men and women the Russian people considered innocent, the suspicion arose—it was to become certainty later— that nothing had changed, and things were as before, even worse.

Angelica Balabanoff believed to the end of her long and puritanic life (she died in 1965) that socialism was a protest against the " misery that is the lot of the many." So perhaps it is. The mistake she made was to believe that the monsters Mussolini and Lenin were rearing had anything to do with socialism.

Settembrini—Angelica Balabanoff's case is a spectacular example, but one could go on extending the list of personalities who changed camps almost indefinitely. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Italian fascist journals of laws and philosophy devoted a great deal of space to the study and exaltation of the Soviet Union. The similarities between fascism and Bolshevism were a constant theme. But the admiration was reciprocated. Consider the famous observation of Maxim Gorky, quoting an even more tell-tale remark of Trotsky's, after the 1924 elections. Gorky, who was living in Capri at the time, was invited by a correspondent of *Il Corriere della Sera* to comment on the results of the 1924 elections which, as you know, had been heavily rigged by the fascists. And this is what Gorky said: " From the governmental acts of Mussolini I have come to know his energy and I admire him, but I prefer Trotsky's opinion to mine—' Mussolini carried out a revolution; he is our best pupil '." And one could, of course, quote Lenin himself, reproaching a delegation of Italian Socialists: " Mussolini? A great pity he is lost to us! He is a strong man, who would have led our party to victory."

Urban—The yearning for Utopia was, in reality, the common denominator behind the creative minorities of both Fascism and Bolshevism. The canvas was broadly conceived; the details were often interchangeable. Speaking in 1943, before the July *coup* that deposed Mussolini, no less authentic a fascist than Gentile said: " Whoever speaks of communism in Italy today is an impatient corporativist," implying that at the height of the war against Bolshevism some of the fascist leaders were still hoping to re-direct the movement to its socialist/communist origins, Italian style. Even well after the war,

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in 1957, Ugo Spirito, the main advocate of fascist corporativism, wrote: "Russian communism is rooted in the reality of a people that conceives the values of the collectivity as constituent elements of its very life. Communion and faith are its principal characteristics." Here we have complete confirmation of what Togliatti suspected in 1935—that the tacit assumptions behind Spirito's left-fascism were not far removed from communism. In the perceptive words of the American scholar, A. James Gregor, "Soviet society has fulfilled . . . the fascist dream of his [Spirito's] young manhood."

I must at this juncture try to resist drawing you into a discussion of the astonishing revival, in the Social Republic of Salò, of some of the fascist movement's early revolutionary inspiration, and the re-surfacing, in 1943–44, of some of Mussolini's early socialist and communist companions, for I have gone over this ground with Renzo de Felice in an earlier discussion. Let me, therefore, concentrate on only two aspects of Mussolini's short-lived Republic: the fact that men like the communist Nicola Bombacci and the socialist Corrado Bonfantini were at all alive, after 20 years of fascism, to play a part, and that, under the Republic of Salò, an extensive social, and one might well say, socialist legislation was put on the statute books which, after the collapse of Salò, the communist-led Committee of National Liberation abrogated as one of its first acts.

Settembrini—There is no question that repression under Italian fascism was incomparably lighter than under Stalinism, and the beneficiaries of Italian fascism included the Italian communists. A story I have recently heard from an Italian communist leader illustrates my point. In 1957 this man read a book by one of Togliatti's friends and collaborators in the early post-war years (Renato Mieli), and disturbed by what he had discovered about Togliatti's role in the Comintern, he went to see him and rebuked him to the effect that if Gramsci had been in the shoes of Togliatti, Gramsci, would have behaved very differently. "Oh, yes," Togliatti replied, "Gramsci would have been among the first to be shot." And, however repulsive it may be for us to weigh the relative merits of the intolerance of dictators, this opinion of Togliatti's certainly justifies Mussolini's words after the death of Gramsci: "If the communists had taken Gramsci, they would have put him to death at once. I let him live." Gramsci, as you know, died after his release from prison.

Mussolini was not the bloodthirsty tyrant of the type of a Hitler or a Stalin. After Hitler's night of the long knives, in which Röhm and many others perished, Mussolini made a point of boasting that he was a moderate man. What Hitler has done, he said, was as monstrous a thing as if I had killed off the men who had helped me to power—the Bottais and Bianchis of our Party. Bianchi, he added, died in his bed in 1930.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Urban—and the assassination of Röhm and his SA followers (to underline your point) produced Stalin's secret admiration of Hitler's ruthlessness and led to an attempt, which was to succeed in 1939, to reach an understanding with him.

Settembrini—Yes, Mussolini's ruthlessness was qualified. That Bombacci and Bonfantini (and there were many others) were able to play a part in Salò was due to the fact that they had been *allowed* to survive—in prison, out of prison, in *confino* and out of *confino*—but they stayed alive. And the fascist *confino* was no Auschwitz and no Gulag. It usually meant banishment to some small island where the prisoners were allowed to lead their own lives. Once or twice a week a police launch would arrive from the mainland to check their numbers—it took some ingenuity not to survive in *confino*.

Urban—Altiero Spinelli told me that he shared his *confino* with various other communists, including Amendola, and that it was during this period, on the island of Ponza, that the local Party organization expelled him on higher orders because he had refused to take the Party line on the Moscow show trials. When I expressed surprise that such a party cell could exist and function in what I thought was a concentration camp or prison, he described the political prisoners' life in *confino* more or less on the lines you have described it.

Settembrini—The compromises Mussolini had to make with the monarchy and the Church robbed him of the possibility of becoming an absolute ruler of the totalitarian type. Whether he made these compromises because he was basically a kindlier man than Lenin or Stalin, or whether it was his opportunism which caused him to behave in a manner that made life under him incomparably more tolerable than it was under Lenin not to say Stalin, is not a matter of great concern to me. There may be truth in both judgments.

Urban—There was undoubtedly a streak of Leninist violence in his make-up which, as you say, he had to suppress. He told Ciano in 1940:

> If, when I was a socialist, I had had a knowledge of the work of the Italian middle class, not purely theoretical as learned by the reading of Karl Marx, but practical, based on experience such as I have now, I would have launched a revolution so pitiless that, by comparison, the revolution of Comrade Lenin would have been child's play.

At the same time Mussolini could be very indignant about atrocities committed by others—especially the Nazis. When he was shown, on 4 December 1939, a confidential report of German behaviour in freshly occupied Posen (as it then was), Ciano records in his *Diary*:

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> With a simplicity which accentuates the horrors of the facts, he (the author of the report) describes all that the Germans are doing: unmentionable atrocities without reason. The Duce himself was indignant; he advised me to see to it that by indirect channels the American and French newspapers get the contents of the report. The world must know.

Where I see Mussolini's character most clearly at variance with the textbook type of the totalitarian dictator is in his sense of self-mockery. For example, in his preface to Margherita Sarfatti's biography of him, Mussolini says:

> In this book my life is to be found recorded—at least, such part of it as can be made known, for every man has secrets and shady nooks that are not to be explored. . . . In essence, it is no great affair—my life. There is nothing extraordinary in it to capture the imagination. No victorious wars. . . . No creations of new systems of thought. It is a life full of movement, certainly, but it is a less interesting life, for instance, than that of the late Mr Savage Landor, the great traveller.

But to return to those communists and socialists who gained a new lease of life under the Nazi/fascist Republic of Salò—

Settembrini—You have mentioned Ugo Spirito, and he is a good example. After a left-fascist past under Mussolini, he became a communist and Stalinist when the war was over. But many other leaders of the Italian Communist Party also hailed from left-fascism. Some of them indeed had been publicly involved with the Republic of Salò. For example, David Laiolo, an important communist and a former editor of *l'Unità* wrote a book at the time of Salò in praise of the Republic of Salò (*The Mouth of the Woman—the Mouth of the Gun*). Alicata and Ingrao—both came from fascism, and as I have already indicated, most of the cultural politics of the Italian Communist Party in its Stalinist period were in the hands of ex-fascists. I regard this as quite natural—to *them* the thing was familiar. Italian fascism and Italian communism are contained in a single circle: the fascists came from the ranks of revolutionary socialism and anarcho-syndicalism—the communists issued from the ranks of fascism.

Urban—So, if the phrase "social-fascism" had not been rendered meaningless by both Stalin and Mao, it would make sense to speak of a single Italian "fascist-socialist" movement, comprising an interchangeable personnel of communists and fascists?

Settembrini—Indeed it would. Togliatti understood this very well. He realized that the Italian Communist Party stood no chance of becoming a mass party unless it associated itself with revolutionary fascism and dissociated itself from the pre-fascist liberal tradition. In the first few

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

years after the war, the Italian communist leaders consistently portrayed fascism as a revolutionary movement which had betrayed its original purpose, and the Communist Party as the movement carrying out the authentic fascist revolution. "The enormous distance that appeared to separate us from the mass of young fascists," Togliatti said in 1948, "was due largely to a misunderstanding."

It is here that we must look for the origins of de Felice's distinction between "fascism as a movement" and "fascism as a regime." And if today the communists are hostile to this distinction, it is because their current policy is to present themselves as heirs to Italian liberalism, not fascism. De Felice has committed the unpardonable indiscretion of reminding them that for 20 years they had been keeping embarrassing company.

* * * * *

Urban—Why did the post-fascist Committee of National Liberation abolish the socialist legislation of Salò? On the face of it, this was a self-defeating measure; for Salò envisaged the abolition of capitalism, industrial self-management, a struggle "against the world plutocracies," radical land-reform, cooperative and state farming, and the socialization of everything that "in scope or function, goes beyond private interests." Let me raise the question in the form in which A. James Gregor has raised it:

> All that would have been necessary to obviate the 'anti-national objectives' of the legislation on socialization would have been the election of representative socialist or communist factory collegia and committees. Instead, the laws themselves were abrogated and the control over Italy's productive enterprise was returned to its capitalist owners. Today that control remains securely in the hands of those same owners.

Did the Committee fear that building on Mussolini's socialist legislation might imply recognition of the legitimacy of the Republic of Salò? Was it psychologically impossible for the victors to recognize constructive intent in anything done by the defeated? To this day, it is not widely known that in the puppet state of Salò near-revolutionary economic and social measures were written into "law."

Settembrini—Your question contains the answer: why is so little known about the social legislation of the Salò Republic? Because at a time when the communists were priding themselves on their anti-fascism, they had no interest in revealing that this common element existed with the Mussolini of Salò. In any case, they could not have taken advantage of it because they had to reckon with American disapproval. Those opposing the communists also preferred to keep silent because they were trying to match the communists in their anti-fascism.

One might argue that the anti-communists stood to gain from pointing to the similarities between what Mussolini had been trying to

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

do in Salò in 1943-44 and what the communists were proposing to do in their programme in 1945 or 1947. But, in the climate prevailing at the time, any intimation that communists and fascists were birds of the same feather would have called down on you the great anti-fascist national sentiment, and robbed you, as a force opposing communism, of all credibility. Such was the temper of politics in Italy after the war.

Urban—Perhaps it is asking a little too much of human nature to build on the heritage of one's enemies. George Kennan asks at one point in his *Memoirs* whether the forcible unification of Europe by Hitler might not have been exploited by enlightened statesmanship as a basis on which to raise a united Europe directly after the war. Theoretically, of course, it should have been possible, but after a savage war and six years of savage propaganda no one in Europe was, or could be expected to be, enlightened enough to say: true, we have all been united by German occupation—but let us now forget the history of this involuntary unity and fill it out with democratic content in the spirit of Jeanne Monnet. People do not act like that, and I suspect the Italian communists' failure to play the cards which history dealt them through the Republic of Salò has an equally simple explanation.

Settembrini—There were also certain solid, factual reasons why Kennan's idea was impracticable. What sort of political forces were still on their feet after the collapse of Nazism and the devastation of Europe? Nationalist forces—de Gaulle for example—and the communists. The first had set their faces against European unification, the second were determined to destroy democracy as well as spoil any chance of a united Europe. The prospects of a democratic, united Europe rising directly from the ashes of the Third Reich were poor. Europe had to wait.

Urban—We have been saying rather damaging things in this conversation about the origins and originators of the Italian Communist Party—damaging, that is, for a party which has built its legitimacy and reputation on an unerring anti-fascism. Aren't we in fact supplying Moscow with fresh ammunition at a time when Moscow is already darkly hinting through Bilak and Zhivkov as well as its own spokesmen that the Italian communists are renegades and splitters? Aren't we making it easier for Moscow to claim: "From Gramsci to this day the Italian Communist Party is honeycombed with fascist tendencies and men taken over intact from the fascists. Is this the kind of Eurocommunism," they would be warning Warsaw, Prague and Budapest, "you want to follow?"

Settembrini— I don't think it is the fascist past of some of the Italian communists and the fascists origins of some members of the communist

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

movement that will displease Moscow. What Moscow is really worried about is the possibility of the Italian Communist Party becoming genuinely liberal. In my opinion, this is not at all what is happening, but Moscow's anxiety is concentrated on this point. Now if the Italian communists were to go liberal, it is very much on the cards that, in their propaganda, the Russians would accuse a genuinely liberalized Communist Party of being "fascist," probably using, to reinforce their case, the kind of evidence we have here listed. But this is standard Soviet procedure—every communist party that has tried to detach itself from the Kremlin has been anathematized as "fascist." Let me say in parenthesis that the ready use the Soviet leaders make of the word "fascist" is implied proof that, for them, fascism is a socialist heresy. The application of "fascist" to Tito, for example, meant two things: first, that Tito had refused to toe Stalin's line and had therefore fallen into "heresy" and, second, that "fascism" was an even more culpable heresy. But both were challenges, not to the basic tenets of socialism, but to its interpretation.

Urban—Trotsky certainly admitted that "Stalinism and Fascism, in spite of deep differences in social foundations, are symmetrical phenomena."

Settembrini—He did. The purpose of our polemics in Italy is to make the Italian Communist Party decide between its fascist kinship *cum* Stalinist past, on the one hand, and a genuinely liberal Eurocommunism, on the other. Why do the communists dislike our insistence? Because they do not want to choose. But, under pressure, it is just possible that the Party will eventually shed its fascist/Stalinist antecedent and emerge as a genuinely liberal socialist force. What Moscow would say to this is of secondary importance, because a secessionist Italian Party would be accused of fascism, whatever the reasons for its unorthodoxy.

Now the links between Mussolini and Gramsci which we have analysed in this conversation—and they have, of course, been examined before by others—are undoubtedly embarrassing, but they are embarrassing for the Russians much more than for the Italian communists. Why?—and here we walk into the thick of communist theology; because if and when it comes to an open break between Moscow and Rome, the Russians would want to set the Gramscian and Togliattian tradition against the Party's "deviant" liberalism. In order to be able to accuse a "rebel" Italian leadership of the betrayal of its trust, Moscow must be in a position to argue that *before* the betrayal the Italian Communist Party was following the correct line. Therefore it is very much in Moscow's interest to suppress the fact that Gramsci was a close associate of Mussolini. If the Russians admitted the link between Gramsci and fascism, then the entire history of the Italian

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Communist Party would appear to have been a ghastly error, and those liberal Italian communists now challenging Moscow would seem entirely justified in their claim that all they were doing was correcting this error.

I do not, therefore, share your fear that giving much-justified publicity to the fascist/communist nexus would damage the international usefulness of the Italian Eurocommunist model. The Russians know all about Gramsci's and Bordiga's association with fascism, but, as I say, if they want to keep their hands free to split an "heretical" Italian Party by appealing to the orthodox elements within it, then they must keep the image of Gramsci, Bordiga and Togliatti entirely untainted.

Urban—Can you forsee a complete break between the Italian communists and Moscow, with the Italian communists picking up where the Prague reformers left off? This would entail a claim on their part that the Eurocommunists alone can authentically speak in the name of Marxism, and that the real heresy was perpetrated in 1917—by Lenin and Bolshevism? Santiago Carrillo and the Spanish Communist Party have come very close to saying just that and have been promptly ostracized for it by Moscow. Doctrinally the truth of such a claim is incontestable; would the Italian communists make it?

Settembrini—They would find it impossible while they are fighting to get their hands on the levers of power. The whole appeal of the Party, and especially its grip on most of the Italian Left, rests, and has always rested, on Soviet backing and the mythology of the Soviet example. The day that image is destroyed, the Party risks its own destruction. A pro-Soviet faction may survive such a holocaust, but the Party as a major political force would not. You can break with Moscow *after* you have come to power—witness the examples of Tito and Mao—but an open clash with the Kremlin while you are still battling your way to office is tantamount to declaring yourself no longer to be communists, and certainly inviting such a charge upon your heads by Moscow. Communist parties cannot exist outside the gravitational fields of one centre or another. If the Italian communists were, nevertheless, to have a showdown with Moscow while still in opposition (and, as I say, the chances of that happening are very small), they would have to line up behind another communist model that also serves as a power-centre. At the time of the Sino-Soviet break, there was a danger that part of the Italian Party would shift its allegiance from Moscow to Peking. Togliatti recognized this and lost no time in declaring himself and the Party to be rigidly pro-Soviet. An anti-Soviet communism that is neither pro-Chinese nor pro-Tito is in practical terms no communism at all. It would mean a complete break with the past, and the Italian communists have never countenanced that.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Their line has always been that they wanted to renew themselves only in the spirit of absolute continuity with their past. Pajetta said it when talking of the crisis of Czechoslovakia; Lombardo Radice said it talking to you and earlier in *l'Unità,* and so have others. Pajetta in particular made it very clear that while the Italian leadership were critical of the present leaders of Czechoslovakia, their criticism ended there. Attempts to involve us in a general assault on the Soviet system, he warned, will not succeed.

Urban—Lombardo Radice *has* gone further than that though—both in talking to myself and in an interview he gave *La Stampa* (on 8 December 1976). In the latter he said:

> . . . it is inevitable that the socialist opposition to socialist governments in the East (for example, Havemann in the GDR and Medvedev in the USSR) should link themselves at least ideologically with Eurocommunism. . . . The truth is that Berlinguer is concerned with revolution in Italy and Western Europe. But these speeches would become voices of opposition if translated and diffused in Moscow, East Berlin, or Warsaw. . . . The truth is that there is a clash between two general perspectives,

i.e. those of Eurocommunism and "the official Marxism of the socialist countries." I would myself take these observations to be tantamount to a general critique of the Soviet system.

Settembrini—Ah, but you must clearly distinguish between what the Italian communists say for purposes of propaganda in the *non*-communist press, and what they say in *l'Unità,* for it is only the latter that gives us some clue to their real intentions. I have here another article by Lombardo Radice under the title "I am a Eurocommunist and a Bolshevik," and he means what his title says: being a Eurocommunist does not mean he is anti-Soviet. Talking to yourself, he made this even more abundantly clear, and I am glad to see that his remarks were picked up by the international press and used in a speech by Henry Kissinger and a lecture by Dr David Owen, the British Foreign Secretary.

But Lombardo Radice (and others of a similar persuasion) has been saying these things for quite some time. In 1971, for example, Lombardo Radice wrote in a non-communist journal:

> If we call "ruling classes" those boses and commanders of the economy who control the workers and decide their wages and production, then without a doubt the managers of state organizations in countries such as the Soviet Union are a "ruling class"—in fact they are often absolute bosses. . . .

Well, the day I see Lombardo Radice write this in *l'Unità,* I will

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

concede that there is a definite break with the Italian communist past, but not before.

Urban—Is there any reason why Eurocommunism, and especially its Italian variant, should not become an alternative centre in its own right? Students of communist history of the distinction of George Kennan feel that this is already happening, and that its capacity to cause damage to the cohesion (such as it is) of the Soviet camp is great and growing. If the anguished protests of certain Soviet and East European leaders are anything to go by, Eurocommunism is a danger to them, and my surmise is that they will subject it to the same kind of abuse as Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin and Stalin heaped on Social Democracy. The process has already started with Carrillo and the Spanish Communist Party.

Settembrini—Abuse—yes; alternative centre—no, and I take my explanation from Marx: "No human being can be expected to commit suicide—neither can a political party." To repeat an earlier point: the Italian communists, as long as they are communists, can never concede that the Soviet system had been a failure from its inception, because that would be tantamount to admitting that the Italian Communist Party, too, has been an error from the ground up. We must remember that it was only through presenting the Soviet Union as a democratic, just, glorious and mighty society that the Italian communists have become the powerful force they are. They cannot reverse themselves on this cardinal point without asking for great trouble. For example, during the last election campaign Berlinguer declared: it was true that the Italian communists criticized the Soviet Union for certain mistakes but they also believed that only in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries had the foundations been laid for real freedom and democracy.

If the communists admitted that they were in fact not much better than Social Democrats and that their history was flawed at its base, they would forfeit every chance of getting elected through the democratic process.

Urban—So Italian democracy requires the Party to stick to its Stalinist/fascist antecedents in order to facilitate its access to power through the ballot box—

Settembrini—paradoxically for us—yes. They—the communists—will of course argue that they *are* democrats.

If the communists *are* in power—*that* is the time for revising the sacred books and perhaps closing the sacred books. *That* might be the time for the Dubček line to come into its own, but this is far too uncertain a possibility for risks to be taken on it. Berlinguer might very well argue that he feels more secure behind the protective shield

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of NATO than he would outside it, but how many Berlinguers are there in the Italian Party? We know that he faces a powerful opposition both at the top and among the rank and file. To facilitate a communist access to power in the hope that, once in power, the Party *will* act as the Czechoslovaks did in 1968, would be a foolhardy step to take. It is the kind of risk Giolitti ran when he enlisted fascist support as a counterweight to the socialists, hoping that fascism would stabilize Italian democracy and then retire peacefully. It did not. The fascists took power, ensconced themselves in power, and stabilization was given a miss. The parallel with 1977 is extremely telling, for today, too, it is the Italian bourgeoisie and the Italian industrialists who clamour for stabilization through the good offices of the Communist Party. At a recent meeting of communist intellectuals Berlinguer raised the question: why does the bourgeoisie hope for a communist victory? Because, he said, the solution of Italy's economic crisis requires great sacrifices from the workers, and the middle classes and industrialists believe that only the Communist Party can persuade the masses to make them. But this, in my view, is not the way in which the Party really conceives its role. Berlinguer made it clear that a rescue operation by the Party would never be allowed to serve the recovery and restoration of Italy's present social and economic order. For the Communist Party, he argued, Italy's crisis and the austerity it entails present between them an opportunity for a radical alternative to capitalism. They are the means for bringing about a revolutionary transformation of society. In other words, history is repeating itself: now as after the First World War, the industrialists hope that the chestnuts will be pulled out of the fire for them by an extremist party. The communists on their part hope to exploit this expectation in order to get their hands on the country's jugular. After that—they will see.

Urban—Berlinguer, as a communist leader, could hardly be expected to say that he was going to restore capitalism—

Settembrini—but that is the very thing he and other communist leaders did say in their propaganda addressed to the general public during the election campaign! At a by now famous briefing in the Foreign Press Club in Rome, the Party's economic leaders assured the Italian industrialists that the latter were right in putting their confidence in the Communist Party, for the Party was aware of their needs and capable of protecting their interests much more effectively than were the Christian Democrats.

Urban—A fine display of the dialectic of which Soviet Party history offers the most telling examples. In 1936, Stalin was interviewed by the American journalist Roy Howard, and this is what he said according to *Pravda* (5 March 1936):

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Howard: Do you not think that there may be genuine fear in capitalist countries of an intention on the part of the Soviet Union to force its political theories on other nations?
Stalin: There is no justification for such fears. . . .
Howard: Does this statement of yours mean that the Soviet Union has to any degree abandoned its plans and intentions to bring about a world revolution?
Stalin: We never had any such plans or intentions.
Howard: You appreciate, no doubt, Mr Stalin, that much of the world has for long entertained a different impression.
Stalin: That is the product of misunderstanding.

Settembrini—Well, in the smaller compass of Italian politics Giorgio Napolitano and Luciano Barca went so far as to say that the Party recognized the necessity of keeping the Stock Exchange in good order, respecting the market economy, and securing ample profit margins for private industry—and, they added, only the Communist Party was in a position to assure these. But where did they say all this? In the pages of *La Stampa*—not in *l'Unità*. In trying to prognosticate what the Italian communists might or might not do in office we can, as pragmatists and students of history, only go by what their leading thinkers and activists *have* said and done, not what they would like us to think they might do.

Berlinguer, Pajetta, Lombardo Radice and other communist leaders claim that there is no break in the Italian communist tradition. If we take the trouble of probing into what the founding fathers of Italian communism did in fact say about communist tactics, we must concede that the claim is justified. Here, for example, is how the allegedly liberal Gramsci, writing from prison in 1930, wanted the Party to proceed from opposition to power:

> The revolutionary prospects in Italy today can be divided into two alternatives—the more and the less probable. The more probable is . . . a period of transition. . . . There will be no immediate dictatorship of the proletariat, but between revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat there will be a period of transition. Therefore the communists must . . . first fight for the Constituent Assembly. The Party's tactics must, therefore, be directed toward this goal without fear of appearing unrevolutionary. In the struggle against fascism, the communists must call for the Constituent Assembly before any of the other parties do, not as an end in itself, but as a means. The Constituent Assembly is the form of organization in which the Party's action can be developed, and must be seen as an instrument for discrediting all the various projects for peaceful reform, and for showing the Italian working class that the only possible solution to Italy's troubles is the proletarian revolution.

My comment is: democracy for Gramsci was a means to kill demo-

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cracy. We have no reason to believe that Berlinguer and the Italian Communist Party think otherwise.

Urban—This may well be the hidden purpose of the Party, but outwardly at least the Party's deviations from orthodoxy are spectacular and convincing, so much so that I can well understand the feelings of those East European communists who perceive in Eurocommunism a most tempting alternative to Moscow's oriental depotism. Here you have a party whose leading cadres do not shy away from demanding the substitution of individual liberty for repression in Russia, Poland, East Germany and Czechoslovakia; who actively support people like Mlynar, Patocka, Michnik, Kuron, Biermann, Havemann, Sakharov and other civil rights fighters; and who came very close to offering a frontal critique of the Soviet system itself.

Fabio Mussi, Cultural Editor of *Rinascita,* said in an earlier talk in this series:

> The whole sense of our policy is to demonstrate that socialism has within it the capacity to develop along a road different from the one it has taken in Russia, and I find it significant as well as gratifying that the signatories of Charter 77 have specifically referred to the example of the Italian Communist Party . . . in our recent criticisms of the suppression of dissent in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Poland we have plainly stated that the root of the problem was structural; it could be understood and put right . . . only as part of the malaise of the entire party/state system. . . . I do not see Leninism as the legitimation of the Party.

Well, however machiavellian the intent of the Italian communists may be, when I hear sentences of this kind, spoken as these were at the Rome headquarters of the Italian Communist Party, I wonder for how much longer Russia can tolerate the thin (and not so thin) end of the Eurocommunist wedge. Men of the persuasion of Mussi have done precisely what you said you hoped the Party as a whole could be pressed into doing: aligned themselves with the spirit of liberalism and repudiated both the Stalinist and Leninist past. The magnetism of this alternative for restive communists in Prague, Warsaw, Budapest, Bucharest, and indeed in Moscow seems to me manifest.

Settembrini—I fear it would be a mistake for them to believe that Italian communism can offer a realistic alternative. Of course, we must understand their feelings: they are pinning their hopes to Eurocommunism for want of anything better. Seeing how the Russians acted in Czechoslovakia in 1968, they are clutching at every straw. But the communist party of a small country can only break away from Soviet colonialism if it has external backing. Ideally, it should be linked to a ruling communist party in a powerful country such as China. Italy and the Italian communists do not meet either condition.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Eurocommunism, as a genuine thing, is a factor of undoubted magnetism for East European *apparatchiks,* but in the correlation of international forces it is most unlikely to become a decisive influence. If Titoism did not, and could not—why should Italian communism?

Urban—There are two points here: Titoism did have a formative influence in preparing the climate of rebellion both before the 1956 Hungarian revolution and the 1968 Prague spring. Second, totalitarian regimes, unless they are destroyed in war, can only be brought to their knees if there is a schism in the ranks of their own elites. I would have thought Eurocommunism might, in a year or two, be strong enough to widen and deepen existing disaffections and perhaps to create fresh ones. When we recall the magnetism which the idea of a united Europe has always had for the people of East/Central Europe, I cannot see why Eurocommunism should not have a like effect on the East/Central European Communist establishments. Admittedly all this may happen under the impact of Eurocommunism *without,* however, Eurocommunism becoming an alternative power-centre. But in whatever form it happened, it would be enough to challenge the authority of Moscow and thus to confront the Soviet leaders with the painful alternative of tolerating or refusing to tolerate it. They would stand to lose if they did—they would stand to lose if they didn't.

Settembrini—I disagree with you. The support which the two great Western communist parties—the Italian and the French—are being given on their march to power by communist dissidents in Eastern Europe is much more effective than the assistance these dissidents receive from the Italian and French parties in return, for what they get is usually given late and less than willingly. If and when the Italian and French communists gain power thanks to the credibility the opposition in Eastern Europe has bestowed on them, they will be finally forced to choose between Leninism and social democracy—there is no third alternative.

But suppose they opt for social democracy without reservations—where would that leave them? They would become outcasts of the Marxist/communist world fraternity, and their ability to support opposition in Eastern Europe would be consequently reduced to the level of the Swedish Socialists or the British Labour Party—sufficient to grant political asylum to the victims of Soviet suppression, but good for little else.

I am ready to concede that if, once they have risen to power, the Italian and French communists were to choose national communism without parliamentary democracy and without individual liberty—in other words a form of Titoism—then this revamped semi-totalitarian model might still, or again, exert a certain influence in feeding the spirit of disaffection in Eastern Europe—in those countries at least

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

where a seamless totalitarianism still exists. But if you think of Kádár's Hungary, there a Titoist type of communism would hardly be regarded as holding out a promise of decisive improvements in social welfare or cultural liberty, although it would, of course, mean a sea-change in the all-important matter of national independence.

But what kind of gain would any of this represent for Italy? To exchange the existing regime for national communism—and without this Eurocommunism can be of little help to the internal opposition in Eastern Europe—would be an awesome regression. Many dissidents who are now resident in Italy and sympathize with Eurocommunism make no bones about admitting that if the Italian Communist Party were to come to power before having gone the whole way to social democracy, they would pack their bags and seek refuge elsewhere. Ironically enough, what they cannot see is that, if this were to happen, the responsibility for having clothed Italian communism in an aura of democratic respectability would have to be laid at their own doorstep.

To sum up: if communism becomes truly "Euro," then it can no longer be communism, in which case Italy stands to gain, and the dissidents may remain safely within our borders, but the Party's leverage in Eastern Europe will be gone. If, however, the Party remains communist, its regression to Leninism is a possibility—indeed, in the long run, a certainty.

We must, therefore, bring it home to the Party that cutting its umbilical cord with Moscow is a less painful and less punishing alternative than keeping it intact. If we want the social democratization of Italian communism we must force the hand of the Berlinguers and Amendolas—this is our only way of helping them.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Homage to Boris Souvarine

*THE 25th anniversary of Stalin's death has provided an occasion to reflect on his role in history, and so undoubtedly will in the next year the 100th anniversary of his birth. We devote a section below to some of the vicissitudes of Stalinography and in particular to its pioneer, Boris Souvarine, whose original biography of Stalin has recently been re-issued in French.**

The remarkable achievement of Souvarine was to write a book which Sydney Hook rightly described as the spadework on the subject and which managed to demythologize its hero when his cult was being produced during the early period of his rule. Almost half a century later, Boris Souvarine depicts in the new edition of his book its previous destinies. We publish below some excerpts from its preface. Habent sua fata libelli!

The Fate of a Book

"THIS book was written between 1930 and 1935 in very difficult circumstances, having been commissioned by an American publisher. . . . During my work I learnt that the publisher, Alfred Knopf, had decided, under a false pretext, to abandon publication on the advice of a pro-Stalinist British 'expert,' Raymond Postgate. He disposed of the contract without consulting me by ceding it to the London publishers, Martin Secker and Warburg, and by offering the American edition to a small, ephemeral firm, Alliance Book Corporation, which after four editions in 1939, passed it on to another publishing house from which I never had any communication. I did not learn about it all until two years later by chance. Nor did Secker and Warburg ever give me the slightest indication about the fate of the English edition.

In the meantime, the manuscript was presented in Paris to *Gallimard* by Brice Parain, who was well versed in Russian and Soviet affairs; he recommended its publication, as did other consultants of this publisher. After a period of waiting, which seemed rather long to me and my friends, one of them, Georges Bataille, asked André Malraux, who was then a member of the firm's readers' committee about it. Malraux replied that he would not commit himself for or against the publication and added (verbatim): 'I think that you, Souvarine, and your friends are right, but I will be with you only when you become the stronger side.' Shortly afterwards, the book was rejected on the advice of a certain Bernard Groethuysen who, masking his pro-Stalin

* Boris Souvarine, *Staline. Aperçu Historique du Bolchevisme* (Editions Champ Libre, Paris, 1977).

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

attitude, used as the definitive argument the warning: 'You are going to spoil your relations with Moscow to the detriment of the firm.'

The work was favourably received by *Plon,* but was opposed there by Gabriel Marcel, an 'existentialist' philosopher, who denied my work the right to exist. However, a conversation between my friend Auguste Detoeuf and Maurice Bourdelle, the head of *Plon,* led to the lifting of the ban; the book appeared in 1935 and was well reviewed in the press."

Arrested and then released from prison in Vichy France, Souvarine escaped to the United States.

"IN the United States new disagreeable surprises awaited the book and its author.

German aggression against the Soviet Union in June 1941 provoked first in Washington and then in the whole country an amazing reversal of evaluations. Stalin, who connived with Hitler in plunging Europe and the world into the horrors of World War II, was suddenly presented as a paragon of democracy, a champion of civilization and humanism. My book was practically put on the index, disappeared from bookshops, and my modest person was ostracized from right-thinking society. I was refused work . . . I was undesirable as the author of the book on Stalin.

* * * * *

On my return to France . . . the Stalinist party, previously outlawed, now participated in the government, its fellow-travellers powerfully influencing all the *milieux;* the cult of Stalin was very much in fashion. The apologists of the innumerable atrocities committed by Stalin and his henchmen were now called, one does not quite know why, 'existentialists' and 'left intellectuals.' All this was happening under the complacent eye of the authorities of the Fourth, and later of the Fifth, Republic, and with the consensus of the '*beau monde*,' of the establishment. It was impossible to go against the tide; one had to tell the truth in almost unknown magazines with small circulations.

* * * * *

It remains to be said why this book was not republished in France after the war. Apart from the destruction of my archives by the GPU and the Gestapo (associated in 1941), which deprived the author of the essential documentation and the instrument of his research, there were also the difficult material conditions. They did not permit me to pursue the work which stopped when the consequences of the Stalin-Hitler Pact began to be felt. The need to earn one's daily bread did not leave enough time to undertake the task of writing a history of Stalin's rule during and after the war. . . . The mass of materials to consider has become so large that to bring the biography of Stalin

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to the end of his reign would require another volume. This the author in his advanced age could not do, and he has to be satisfied with providing a short supplement, some additional notes, and suggestions for further reading.

With this, the essential has been said, and I can only thank the young professors, historians, sociologists and editors who think that this book has not become out of date and deserves to be republished as it is, that it has retained its value almost half a century after the author wrote its first sentence. . . . May I conclude by echoing that celebrated thinker [Marx] who 110 years ago adopted as his motto the words of the great Florentine: '*segui il tuo camin e lascia dir la gente!*' [Go your own way, whatever people may say!]

Boris Souvarine, April 1977."

Stalin: How and Why

Boris Souvarine

THERE are already a fair number of works on Stalin and his regime, several indeed of real merit, yet none gives an explicit answer to the question inevitably raised in the alert reader's mind: why and how was Stalin able to impose himself as sole master on the pseudo-Soviet empire, over and above the other leaders of the one and only Party and of the so-called proletarian state, over leaders, that is, who, it is unanimously agreed, surpassed him in all respects? Indeed, at the time of Lenin's death in 1924 scarcely anyone even knew Stalin's name, except for professional revolutionaries in the higher reaches of the Party. Lenin himself, in the document known as his "testament," named five of his closest associates as rightful successors: Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, and Pyatakov. Five years later Stalin had ousted them all from their leading positions, as a prelude to their extermination. Why and how?

The communists for their part denied the existence of this famous "testament" for 30 years, denouncing it as a fake when Max Eastman and I published it in 1927. In the "testament," the authenticity of which was finally admitted by Khrushchev in his secret speech of 1956, Lenin said with great circumspection that Stalin "has concentrated enormous power in his hands by becoming General Secretary, and I am not convinced that he will always exercise it with sufficient prudence." He does not say that Stalin "became" General Secretary with his, Lenin's benediction, neither does he say what this "enormous power" consisted of, or how it was executed, nor why nothing or no one could curb it, far less oppose it.

Why should the secretary of a party hold such immense power? In this case he was appointed to carry out the leadership's decisions, to ensure the safe arrival and despatching of mail, to sort out documents,

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

send circulars, keep an eye on subordinates, etc. Helena Stassova, Sverdlov, Krestinsky, then the threesome of Krestinsky, Preobrazhensky and Serebryakov, followed by another threesome, Molotov, Yaroslavsky and Mikhailov, had all in turn modestly performed the duties of the Secretariat without encroaching on the authority of the Central Committee. All this was to change over a period of several years during which Stalin was General Secretary with Molotov and Kuibyshev as his assistants. As it is, Lenin's remark is very obscure, though at the time its meaning would have been clear to the initiated in the higher echelons of the Party and state, identical to all intents and purposes.

Trotsky, for his part, is a little more explicit, since he was seeking to inform a wide audience, but he does not offer any explanation either of the General Secretary's irresistable and "immense power." He neither describes its mechanism, nor reveals the *modus operandi* of an authority against which all objections, all resistance, all opposition proved powerless, indeed, were vanquished from the start. In his book on Stalin, Trotsky says that the latter's grip on the "political machine" (in Russian, *apparat*, from the German *Apparat*) in the space of less than two years "became formidable." This theme of the power of the *apparat* recurs frequently in Trotsky's writings in exile. But why and how did the *apparat*, the Party's principal instrument, in practice transform the Party into its own instrument? That is the question.

Trotsky left obscure precisely the issue that requires illumination. After his open conflict with the leading *troika* which set itself up as sole custodian of Lenin's thinking (1923), Trotsky continually criticized and condemned the communist bureaucracy and officialdom, in short, the *apparat*. Since however, the Party had identified itself with the state, virtually all its members had become officials, and hence bureaucrats and cogs in the political machine. As a result, the splitting of the Party into majority and opposition divided the bureaucracy and the *apparat*. All tendencies and factions were made up of officials in a highly complex political and economic system, a detailed description of which would require a doctoral thesis. We shall have to make do here with a rough outline in order to get down to the "why and how" of Stalin.

IN a work published in 1935,* I explained the conditions in which Zinoviev and Kamenev placed Stalin in the Party Secretariat in 1922, and I then wrote the following: "In the Party Secretariat Stalin set about an unprecedented and invisible undertaking: one by one, he placed, displaced and replaced the officials of the *apparat*, according to mysterious considerations known only to himself." Then: "Generally speaking, reasons of discipline were a sufficient justification for these nominations and changes." In the pages that followed I described and commented on Stalin's rise to absolute power and his methods of

* Boris Souvarine, *Staline. Aperçu Historique du Bolchevisme* (Paris, 1935), new edition, 1940; enlarged edition, 1977. English edition, *Stalin* (Longman, Green, London, 1939).

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

overcoming all resistance. But at that time, in the early 1930s, the necessary perspective was still lacking; Stalin's omnipotence had not yet been displayed with the necessary precision, nor, I venture to put it, in all its prosaic reality, its stupefying vulgarity.

It is necessary, therefore, to explain in concrete terms what I put in the following way in the book mentioned above:

> In such a vast country, with such scanty communications and where provincial life is so dreary, a few kilometres can decide disgrace or advancement. The transfer from one institution to another can also confer benefits of a moral or material order. In short, in this or that position in the hierarchy, holding office implies present satisfaction to a greater or lesser extent, or promises for the future.

Such generalities are adequate to depict a state of affairs that was still tolerable; however, it was to worsen rapidly, and one must dot the i's to bring home the cruel conditions that Stalin was able to manipulate in order to quell disobediance or indeed to check even the slightest sign of reticence in "Party discipline."

Within a few years of Lenin's death the General Secretary was the Party, and the fault for that lies with those who, like Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Bukharin, would soon have reason to complain of it. The leaders whom Stalin decided to do away with were in fact the creators of a system whose lethal nature they condemned too late, a system implying the *ultima ratio,* and which Khrushchev was to describe as a "mincing machine," a mincing machine for human flesh. (*Khrushchev Remembers. The Last Testament*, Boston, 1974.)

Those who resort to fixed notions and ossified ideas will never understand the Soviet world, its history or its institutions. Indeed, after the October *coup,* under the pressure of circumstances, both personalities and events in eastern communism developed with disconcerting speed, forcing themselves on the entire population, which in turn grew more and more hostile to the so-called "Soviet" regime.

The party which took power in 1917 was still a social-democratic party: but it was to change its name, and not merely its name, a few months later. Lenin in power was not the same man he had been before he seized power. Formerly an apologist for democracy (the texts exist), he was to disapprove when his comrades, like good socialists, abolished the death penalty (November 1917). Obsessed by historical memories of Jacobinism and the Paris Commune, Lenin was to advocate the terror. He and his associates vociferously demanded the convening of the Constituent Assembly: yet they were to suppress it with a stroke of the pen and *manu militari.* Stalin too changed a great deal after a few years in power.

All this is explained in the 600 pages of the afore-mentioned book. I now intend to fill in the gap and expose the instrument which enabled Stalin to identify himself with the Party, the ultimate custodian of historical truth, according to Lenin and, according to his disciples,

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

humanity's infallible guide, now and forever, in its march towards the golden age after worldwide revolution.

TO begin with, it is important to remember that Stalin was at one and the same time a member of the Party's Central Committee, its Politburo and its Orgburo (bureau for organization), People's Commissar of Nationalities and Commissar of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate when he "became" (Lenin *dixit*) General Secretary of the Party. This excessive accumulation of offices provoked strong criticism amongt the communist elite and, at the 11th Party congress in 1922, Preobrazhensky voiced their feelings. "Is it conceivable that a single person could answer for the work of two commissariats and in addition for the Politburo, the Orgburo and some 10 Central Committee commissions?" It was Lenin himself who replied to Preobrazhensky, justifying by a "lack of manpower" the "immense power" devolved to Stalin. No doubt he had forgotten this exchange by the following year when he dictated the "testament" hidden for long under a bushel.

But as if this accumulation of power did not suffice, Stalin was given yet another mission, his most "responsible," according to the jargon of the period, that of Politburo representative in the GPU "college," the highest authority on the question of death sentences. It was Stalin who, without the slightest scruple, gave the Party's sanction to the most unjust and extreme measures of repression, measures which Lenin and Trotsky viewed as a regrettable necessity, though they preferred to keep their distance from the whole business.

The intellectuals in the Politburo were able to theorize about the terror; but what they needed was a tough, insensitive man to put it into practice. In Stalin they found just the politician for this task that they shrank from, Stalin in duo with Dzerzhinsky, a skilful practitioner of the ways of the police and the art of bloodletting. But all this still does not explain the mystery which transformed the party of "Lenin and Trotsky" as it was known at the time, into Stalin's party.

This secret lies hidden in one of the Central Committee commissions to which Preobrazhensky referred. The commission, or department, in question has not gone unnoticed, and several competent authors mention it. But its function needs to be described precisely, and the decisive role it played in the internal struggle needs to be stressed. In Stalin's hands it became a vital cog in the "political machine" which hemmed in the Party and the state—the two being inextricably entwined—and commanded the destiny of every individual and family. It had not been thus at the beginning of the new regime, but grew to be so in the years after the civil war, becoming ever harsher during Lenin's illness, then still more so after his death. But it is not sufficient to refer to it merely as a part of the machinery of the Secretariat; it is important to describe it at work in the General Secretary's service, with all its moral and human consequences as well as its political results.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN his important book *How Russia is Ruled* (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), Professor Merle Fainsod rightly devotes several passages to one of the organs of the Secretariat which had gone unnoticed till then: "In 1920 a special section of the Secretariat—*Uchraspred,* the Account and Assignment Section—was established to control the 'mobilizations, transfers and appointments of members of the Party'." Further on:

> The *Uchraspred* concentrated first on filling Party posts. Appointments to the highest Party positions came under the jurisdiction of the *Orgburo* . . . The *Uchraspred* rapidly extended its control down through the *guberniya* or provincial level. By the beginning of 1923, its control reached the secretarial personnel at the *uyezd* or county level. The report of the *Uchraspred* to the Twelfth Party Congress in April 1923 indicated that more than ten thousand assignments had been made in the preceding year . . . Stalin, in his organizational report to the congress, made no effort to conceal the range of the *Uchraspred's* activities; indeed, he revealed that it was expanding its jurisdiction into the state apparatus.

Several passages from Merle Fainsod could be quoted to advantage, but in the present context we shall have to limit ourselves. The *Orgraspred,* the *Uchraspred's* successor, "operated as another powerful lever of control over local Party organizations. Lazar Kaganovich, the head of this section in 1922 and 1923, was one of Stalin's most faithful disciples." A chapter on the Secretariat explains:

> The key section in the Central Committee Secretariat was the Organization-Assignment Section (*Orgraspred*). It was created in 1924 by a merger of the *Uchraspred* and the old Organization-Instruction Section. The *Orgraspred* functioned as the cadre office of the Stalinist machine . . . Between the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Congresses, the *Orgraspred* handled the placement of 8,761 Party workers. . . At the Sixteenth Congress in 1930, L. Kaganovich announced that the *Orgraspred* had arranged the assignments of approximately eleven thousand Party workers in the preceding two years.

Fainsod's description of the monstrous "machine" of the Party, of the central *apparat,* takes up some 25 pages.[1]

Professor Leonard Schapiro, in his book *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (London, 1960), now a classic, puts it more briefly, with a categorical conclusion:

> There was only one major change in its [the Secretariat's] structure after 1923. This was the merger in 1924 of the Assignment Department (*Uchraspred*) and the department for organization and instruction into one department for both organization and assignment (*Orgraspred*). This immediately became the key department

[1] These two abbreviations are a contraction of the following designations, which are difficult to translate precisely: *Uchetno-raspredelitelnyi otdel* (the idea of registration, accounting, assignment and nomination); and *Organizatsionno-raspredelitelnyi otdel* (the idea of organization and distribution, assignment); *otdel* means department.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> of the Secretariat, which concentrated in its hands the entire direction of subordinate party organs and the all-important function of making appointments. Its history is the story of Stalin's success in controlling the party.

The last sentence is the most important, but it requires elucidation.

A. Avtorkhanov (*Stalin and the Soviet Communist Party,* New York, 1959) mentions Kaganovich as the head of the department for organization and instruction, later of the department for organization and assignment, no more (the abbreviations *Uchraspred* and *Orgraspred* do not lend themselves to exact translation). Professor Robert C. Tucker mentions the *Uchraspred* briefly, translated as *Records and Assignments* without according it any major importance (*Stalin As Revolutionary,* New York, 1973). Adam Ulam and other biographers do not mention the two *raspreds* at all.

In an article entitled "Stalin's Accomplices" written in 1956 and published in the magazine *Est et Ouest* (Paris, No. 171, 1 April 1957), I asked the question:

> How could a man who at Lenin's death totally lacked prestige of any kind come to acquire the power of life and death over a population of some two hundred million, and in particular over his closest political associates, his intellectual superiors, as well as the power to degrade them by torture and to dishonour his victims?

My answer: "Stalin did not rise to the top entirely by his own efforts: he had accomplices." Among the latter, "in order of importance, Lazar Kaganovich was Stalin's chief assistant and accomplice from 1922 onward, and the principal architect of his extraordinary political fortune. We may regard Kaganovich as a prototype in [the history of] Stalinism and, as such, he merits special attention."

I followed this with a brief account of Kaganovich's career. In 1922 he

> was chosen to head the Central Committee's "Department of Organization and Instruction," which succeeded the *Uchraspred* (Department of Registration and Assignment), and was later to become the *Orgraspred,* the Department of Organization and Allocation. In this capacity, invisible to the untrained eye, known only to the initiated in the Soviet State and whose very existence, —let alone its significance—was unsuspected by anyone on the outside, Kaganovich was to be the decisive instrument of Stalin's "will to power."
>
> Indeed, the aforementioned department of the Central Committee had control over the fate of all Party functionaries; it could appoint, transfer and replace them for reasons which discipline did not allow them to question. Each person's position in the hierarchy depended on this department, as did his proximity or otherwise to the capital or to large urban centres. Thus Stalin, with Molotov's assistance and abetted by Kaganovich, was able by means of personnel changes, promotions and demotions to render harmless the elite individuals who were obstructing him, and to show favour to docile

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> mediocrities who would readily and blindly follow his lead. He thus formed local and regional Party committees to suit his own liking, and then convened Party conferences and congresses which successively ousted Trotsky and his supporters, Zinoviev, Kamenev and their supporters, and Bukharin and Rykov and their supporters, consigning them to the arbitrary and implacable hands of the GPU.

In this way, on the strength of his multiple offices and by the apparently legal means of the *Uchraspred* and then the *Orgraspred*, Stalin controlled the living conditions of each communist and his family. In *Terrorisme et Communisme* (Paris, 1920), Trotsky wrote, in an attempt to justify the militarization of labour:

> In our country there can be no other means of advancing towards socialism than by authoritarian control of the country's economic forces and resources, centralized distribution of the working class in accordance with a general plan. The working-class state considers it has the right to send the worker wherever his labour is necessary.

All the more reason for the Party to arrogate to itself the power to determine for its members, bound by this extra allegiance, the location, nature and conditions of their life . . . and of their death. If it is true, as the saying goes, that "any fool can govern with a state of siege," how much easier it was for Stalin, a man completely lacking all scruples, to impose the idolatrous cult of his own sinister person, given the monstrous prerogatives which Lenin's Party-state conferred upon him.

As early as 1920, that is, under Lenin, courageous and clear-sighted militants had protested against authoritarian methods of imposing "exile by administrative methods" as a means of getting rid of intractable elements. At the ninth Party congress in 1920, P. Yureniev declared: "One is sent to Christiania, another to the Urals, a third to Siberia," and I. Yakovlev testified that "the Ukraine has become a place of exile. Comrades who are undesirable in Moscow for one reason or another are being deported there. . ." (op. cit., pp. 251–2).

In 1921, after they had got a nonconformist motion carried at the Trades Union Congress, Ryazanov and Tomsky were promptly removed from office; Tomsky was dispatched to Turkestan, Ryazanov sent on a mission abroad (op. cit., p. 278). The list of persons thus banished during the 1920s is a long one. In those days allowances were still made for people's qualifications, for services rendered and for abilities that could still be utilized. However, in the knife-war which Stalin launched against all who were a nuisance to him, after Lenin's death and especially after the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution there was no longer any question of showing consideration towards the most respectable communists. On Stalin's orders, the *Uchraspred* and the *Orgraspred* operated on a grand scale with ever-diminishing respect and ever-increasing severity.

A few years more, and the age of golden exile—of various missions and commissions abroad—was over. It was no longer possible to speak

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the Ukraine, or even of the Urals, as "places of exile." The prospect of transfer to Siberia becoming mandatory made the most earnest of opponents think twice if they were little inclined to needless sacrifice. For there was Siberia and Siberia, the places fit for habitation and the desolate regions where life, for civilized Europeans, was tantamount to slow death.

Uch-ras-pred . . . Org-ras-pred . . . The three syllables bore a dissuasive force which no argument of the Left or of the Right could counter, at least for the majority of middle-ranking cadres who, for that matter, could not understand why their traditional leaders were suddenly becoming unqualified to assume their former responsibilities and were finding themselves reduced to the ranks, replaced, and finally disgraced, punished and, where necessary, delivered to the secular arm. Being cast out of the Party after the apparently statutory period of persecution meant in effect being cast into the domain of the GPU, i.e. to an arbitrariness that knew no bounds.

It was a process stretching over several years, bound up with the intimate history of the regime, and masked by shrill polemic and sham pseudo-doctrinal controversies, with bouts of quotation-slinging from Marx and Lenin, a process that cannot be described in a few lines. Stalin's patient and multifarious operations unfolded on numerous levels and under various pretexts in order to realize a single unique design: to transform a Leninist oligarchy into a Stalinist oligarchy made up of *parvenus* personally indebted to Stalin for their advancement in the *apparat*, and dependent on him for their chance to accede to the highest levels of the hierarchy in the new social elite, the new class of exploiters, of privileged, of profiteers.

Besides the "immense power" which he owed to Lenin and which worried the latter too little and too late, Stalin was endowed with the "brain of a sleuth," as Trotsky once said, his vindictive memory stocked with a veritable card-index of political and administrative personnel who had any influence. This he was able to use and abuse to suit his most sordid whims without having to reckon with the merest of checks and balances which the democratic system of North America has at its disposal. This index recorded all the particulars, the blemishes, the weaknesses, the denunciations, the gossip, the *liaisons dangereuses* and compromising connections of members of the Party "unlike any other" (to quote Stalin approximately). With an organ like the *Orgraspred*, it was possible to influence and manipulate both professed and prospective nonconformists in the name of Party discipline, to which each person was by definition pledged to submit.

For a number of years Stalin was obliged to operate under the cover of Party legality, in accordance with the decisions of the two *raspreds* which decided the lot of all recalcitrants. The details of these machinations would make excessively long and tedious reading. After a certain point the "father of the peoples" had no further need of any cover; the *Orgraspred* lost the occult part of its *raison d'être*, the secret police

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

began acting on oral or written instructions from Stalin or his Mafia, sometimes simply on a telephone call (Svetlana Alliluеva provides a striking example of this). However, during the transitional phase towards absolutist autocracy it was the *Orgraspred* which was regarded as representing the wisdom and will of the omniscient Party, which knew intuitively in what particular respect and to what end each communist must discipline himself to serve the new idol, the pseudo-proletarian state personified by Stalin.

NOTWITHSTANDING the texts I mentioned earlier, notably those by Merle Fainsod and Leonard Schapiro, the key role of the two *raspreds* has escaped the notice of writers who have turned their efforts towards deciphering the "Stalin enigma." Consequently, they explain his rise to power and his omnipotence by crediting him with various imaginary talents, and fail to see that, most important of all, he practised the "all is permitted" theory, the very thought of which so horrified Dostoevsky. Lacking all the "charismatic" qualities which lend the despot glamour, Stalin surpassed all his rivals in his capabilities of the most contemptible kind—cunning, intrigue, lies, cruelty, in his intrinsic perversion and total lack of principles and moral sense. His strength lay also in his utter contempt for the official doctrine to which his adversaries clung for dear life. The epitome of deliberate unscrupulousness, Stalin knew how to make use of the *apparat* Lenin had bequeathed to him, and succeeded in perfecting it and bending it to his own strictly personal ambition with the help of the *Orgraspred*, which his hands had fashioned into an irresistible instrument whose efficiency I feel may best be demonstrated at this juncture in terms less abstract than those hitherto used.

Let us imagine a middle-ranking Party official, Ivanov, suspected of wrong thinking, a typical case which will reveal the experienced reality that does not emerge from the dry data of programmed instructions. Married, with two children, Ivanov has weathered the civil war and aspires to peace and tranquillity. It has taken him years to obtain a room for himself and his family (the housing shortage was unimaginable in the 1920s and 1930s). For one reason or another, or perhaps for no reason at all, the *Orgraspred* transfers him to Turukhansk in the far north of Siberia where the ground is permanently frozen and the thermometer drops to −40° in winter. There is no questioning the decision. The Party, divine hypostasis of History, has need of Ivanov in Turukhansk. He must leave, break his ties with family and friends and take his wife and children off to vegetate together wretchedly somewhere near the Arctic circle, deprived of the slightest comfort, communications and intellectual resources. It is roughly the equivalent of the most rigorous deportation under the tsarist regime.

Imagine Ivanov's state of mind. He cannot understand what purpose his misfortune can possibly serve. He reflects on the sad fate of his wife and children and perhaps of his parents, separated from their near and

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dear ones. In any case, he can do nothing to change events which transcend him. The opposition leaders are criticizing Stalin in connexion with a miners' strike in England and the revolutionary movement in China. The Party rank and file comprehends none of it. How will Ivanov's being in Turukhansk help the British miners or the coolies in Shanghai? Would he not do better to pretend to approve of the ruling team, acknowledge the wisdom of Stalin and wait for better days?

Every political exile was obsessed by bitter reflections like these. Most dissidents would end by "capitulating" (the expression of the times). Besides, had not Trotsky said at the 15th Party congress in 1926: "Stalin is the most outstanding person in our Party, the most important member; without him we would have no Politburo"? Ivanov feels his convictions growing weaker. Soon the opposition leaders would rally one after another to the official "line" in the name of the Party's pre-eminence. The rest is easy to guess. The Party would be united, 100 per cent. Not that this would prevent Stalin from liquidating, in his own good time, almost all the members of Lenin's party.

This rather schematic outline had a great many variants. There was no shortage of places of exile in the vastness of the Soviet land with its range of different climates, and nature provided the *Orgraspred* with a never-ending variety of ways to discipline the flock. Relegation to Tadjikistan was preferable to enforced sojourn in the Altai. Sometimes, good comrades would intercede to negotiate a surrender that would appear honourable. A small number of diehards, especially those who were unmarried, stood their ground. A certain number of examples could be cited to relieve the stark picture. But the end result was unaltered: Stalin was "elected" to the Supreme Soviet with more than 100 per cent of the votes. More than 100 per cent. . . .

Under the logic of the system combined with the homicidal mania of Stalin himself, the GPU gradually took the place of the *Orgraspred,* and the *ultima ratio* was the "mincing machine," especially after the death of Kirov in 1934 and the horrors that ensued. However, Roy Medvedev tells us that as far back as 1930 Yezhov was appointed chief of the *Orgraspred,* a fact that speaks volumes for the accomplishments of that organ after it had been licked into shape by Kaganovich. Yagoda's successor as chief of the secret police in 1936, Yezhov outdid all the earlier atrocities before being liquidated in his turn, and Stalin was cynical enough to remark to the aircraft designer A. S. Yakovlev: "Yezhov was a louse; in 1938 he killed a lot of innocent people. That's why we had him shot" (quoted by A. S. Yakovlev, Michael Heller and Roy Medvedev). It goes without saying that Yezhov was no more than Stalin's slavish tool, like his predecessor and his successor.

THE Soviet state, uniting Party and administration, forms a gigantic pyramid made up of a variety of cells and a multiplicity of departments under local and regional executive committees, all positioned according to a meticulously observed hierarchy from base to apex, and

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

subordinate to the supreme authority of a single focal point, the Party Central Committee, of which the permanent organs are, in theory, the Politburo and the Secretariat. But, as Bernard Shaw has remarked, at a certain point Stalin was confirmed as general secretary of a committee, all of whose members had been appointed by himself precisely in order that they should appoint him General Secretary.

Beneath the dominant structure of the Party, several parallel structures combine and interweave: pseudo-soviets, pseudo-trade unions, the Communist Youth League, economic institutions and police organizations. These different structures appear inextricably intertwined and entangled in a veritable maze to which only the Secretariat, its Orgburo and its *Orgraspred* (if the latter still exists) hold the vital clue. At each level of these bureaucratic networks there are corresponding advantages of all kinds, notably material privileges, which foment internal rivalries, careerism and blatant corruption (housing conditions, automobiles, paid vacation trips, "bonuses," special shops reserved for "nomenclature" employees where the ordinary public are not admitted). An improbable but nonetheless real superimposition of committees somehow or other keeps the system going, namely, from the bottom to the top of the tree, the plethora of *koms* (local, district, city, *oblast,* regional) and *ispolkoms* (executive committees) subordinate in their turn to numerous still higher *koms,* and, towering oppressively over all of them, the obligarchy of which Lenin used to speak when he was in the mood for frankness.

All this is the empirical work of the man who declared in *The State and Revolution* in 1917 that the state would start to wither away immediately after the socialist revolution had come to pass. The work was realized in stages, with the aim of boxing in the refractory population and forcing it to submit to the new regime; for even the minority of the electorate who voted for the Bolsheviks in the Constituent Assembly had not voted for the Cheka or the terror, nor for communism—they thought they were voting for peace, the distribution of land and free soviets. This monstrous edifice of state has its correspondingly aberrant ideology, a pseudo-Marxism, a simplistic verbal caricature which also was Lenin's creation both in theory and in practice. All Stalin did was to debase to its extremity what Lenin had invented, but, while Lenin had been sincere in his socialist intentions, the same cannot be said of his less admirable successors.

As for Trotsky, anxious to smooth over his old disagreements with Lenin, flinching before the treacherous suspicion of "Bonapartism" and haunted by the historical precedent of "Thermidor," he was obliged to vie in so-called "Bolshevik-Leninist" orthodoxy with his adversaries, while denouncing *in extremis*—and rightly—"the system of terror by the *apparat,*" but in conditions where this *apparat,* of which he had himself been a part, was now capable of suppressing any dissonant voice and of relentlessly punishing any stray inclination to dissidence.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Trotsky played his part, with Lenin, in forging the pernicious myth of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and the disastrous dogma of the Party's infallibility, in contempt of Marx's real ideas, which were invoked at random to suit the circumstances. The two of them, intoxicated with their own doctrinal certainty, perched upon the summit of the Soviet bureaucratic pyramid, failed to see what was developing at the lower levels, displaying a lack of awareness which eventually presented Stalin with all the controls on a plate.

So ends this brief and, of necessity, bare outline of the how and why of Stalin's enigmatic career. Nothing in my account permits the founder of the so-called Soviet state to be identified—as too many people are inclined to identify him—with his heirs: the two men could not be more different by nature and motives, not to mention everything else. When Victor Adler said teasingly to Plekhanov: "Lenin is your son," Plekhanov came back at him with: "If so, he's an illegitimate son" . . . Lenin might have said as much of Stalin. For the latter was not another Lenin; those who sincerely believe so are very much mistaken. But that is another story.

Translated by Hilary Sternberg

The Real Stalin

Leonard Schapiro

IT is good to be able to welcome a new edition of Boris Souvarine's epoch-making study of Bolshevism.* It was published in French in 1935, and reissued in revised form in 1940. English translations appeared both in the USA and in Great Britain. It is necessary to recall the political climate of the years 1935–40 in order to understand why this book did not, at the time, receive the acclaim it deserved, and which is now accorded to it by every historian of Bolshevism and the Soviet Union with minimal pretensions to objectivity. But things were very different when the book first appeared. Some scholars there were who suspected that all might not be true about the picture which Soviet Russia projected of its history, but felt that there was not enough evidence to challenge the official version; many more (if the name of "scholar" can be applied to such persons) were by reason of their political sympathies with the "new civilization" (to use the phrase made infamous by the late Sidney and Beatrice Webb) largely indifferent to truth on the whole subject. The Spanish civil war won many sympathisers to the Soviet side—if only out of detestation of General Franco and his fascist allies. In France there was the additional euphoria of the Popular Front. Even the cloud cast by the Nazi-Soviet pact proved only tem-

* Boris Souvarine, *Staline. Aperçu Historique du Bolchevisme* (Editions Champ Libre, Paris, 1977).

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

porary, soon to be dispelled by the sunlight of the entry of the USSR into the war (if "entry" is the correct way to describe a belligerent whose faith in Hitler was such that he kept supplying Germany with war materials right up to the moment when the invasion of his territory took place).

Boris Souvarine, a French socialist (in spite of his name) since the First World War, was one of the founders of the French Communist Party and a Secretary of the Comintern until he was expelled for "indiscipline." Back in France he became a vigorous critic of what he saw as the perversion of Bolshevism by Stalin. Apart from this book, which is his major work, he acquired, after the war, a great reputation by his penetrating analysis of Soviet politics published in such journals as *Est et Ouest*, and *Le Contrat Social*—of which he was the founder. He is now 83 years of age. His book is reprinted without change (except for additional bibliographical information) and a 50-page postscript.

THERE is no doubt that today Souvarine's life of Stalin is widely accepted as the best available. It has, indeed, a refreshing political realism which makes the efforts of the late Isaac Deutscher to present a "historical perspective" in his, much more widely read, biography of Stalin look very thin. The novelty of Souvarine's historical approach—and in 1935 this was a real innovation—was to treat Soviet history as subject both to general political principles and to the effects of the character of the individuals who influenced it. Most writing on Soviet and Bolshevik history up till then could be broadly divided into two categories. First, the personal attacks of disappointed oppositionists, which, though more often true than not (as we now know) tended to be dismissed as polemics. And secondly (a genre which still survives), a form of economic, sociological, historicist mishmash which elevated Soviet history to a class all of its own, indeed to the kind of rarified level of abstraction where references to such things as murder or political intrigue seemed like vulgar intrusion. I cannot do better than to quote from Souvarine's postscript:

> Coming now to historical materialism and to economic determinism, whatever element of truth these theories, like other more or less debated doctrines, may contain, one must believe with Machiavelli that "the world was always and without exception peopled by men who have the same passions" . . . one must know at last that one can become "the prince"—or first secretary of the Party—"by criminal means," in other words by methods aimed against the people, become prince "by a way which is criminal and vile" like Agathocles of Sicily: "One cannot say that it is meritorious to kill one's fellow-citizens, to betray one's friends, to be faithless and without pity or religious bond. Such a course of action can lead to power, not to glory . . . His bestial cruelty and inhumanity, like his crimes without number, do not allow that he should be allotted a place of fame among men of excellence." These reflections do not come from

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> Marx, nor Hegel, nor Freud. They come from Machiavelli. We must still learn how to read him (p. 613).

It is also the language of Acton. History is none the worse for a little old-fashioned morality.

It is much to be hoped that an English or American publisher will republish this book in translation. There is no doubt that it should form part of the education of every Western politician who is allowed within yards of a Soviet politician. It is, indeed, so intended by the author, who in his postscript, which is mainly concerned with the Second World War, does not spare the pathetic errors of judgment on Stalin and on Soviet Russia of which, entirely through ignorance, be it said, the politicians were guilty. Roosevelt, of course. But even Truman, who proved to be a wise president in the end, had this nonsense to say about "Joe," to whom he took a great liking at Potsdam . . . "Joe is a prisoner of the Politburo. He cannot do what he wishes. He gives undertakings and he would honour them if he could, but the members of the government say quite sharply that he shall not keep his promises" (p. 591). Neither Churchill nor de Gaulle comes out very well either in the test of understanding Soviet politics.

Even at 83 Souvarine is still battling to destroy myths—and some non-myths too. (The latest "myth" he has tackled is, in a review of Solzhenitsyn's *Lenin in Zurich*, the funding of Lenin by the Germans, which, in the face of all the evidence, Souvarine refuses to accept). In the case of Stalin this is a very necessary activity, since the Soviet pundits are indefatigable in rewriting their history. True, their prevarications do not fall on such fertile soil as they did in 1935—there has, after all, been a considerable development in standards of scholarship on Soviet history in the West since. This development is, in itself, in large measure due to the work of Boris Souvarine. Long may he remain with us to ply his vitriolic pen in the cause of truth.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stalin and History: Perspectives in Retrospect

Leopold Labedz

> The Moscow Trials, which so shocked the world, signify the death agony of Stalinism. A political regime constrained to use such methods is doomed. Depending upon external and internal circumstances, this agony may endure for a longer or shorter period of time. But no power in the world can any longer save Stalin and his system.
>
> Leon Trotsky, *The Stalin School of Falsification* (1937)

> The coming epoch may bring with it a breathtaking reversal of the process by which the Soviet democracy of the early days of revolution was transformed into an autocracy. . . . However half-hearted the intentions of the Malenkov government may have been and whatever its ultimate fate, it already has the historic distinction that it has taken the first steps which should lead towards democratic regeneration.
>
> Isaac Deutscher, *Russia after Stalin* (1953)

> When Stalin's body was evicted from the Mausoleum on the Red Square . . . a prominent editor of a great bourgeois paper remarked wistfully: "Now we may have to raise monuments to Stalin. Without Stalin the Soviet Union may indeed become so much more attractive to our working classes that we shall face dangers infinitely more real and threatening than those we had to face during his reign of terror." . . .
>
> Tamara Deutscher, *Détente and Socialist Democracy* (1975)

THE 25th anniversary of Stalin's death has been dutifully marked in the "bourgeois" press and dutifully ignored in the communist press. There were no surprises on either side. In the West the picture of Stalin has been subject to a steady process of realistic exposure during this quarter of a century: from Khrushchev's "secret speech" to Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*. Various other influences contributed to this process: reminiscences by Milovan Djilas and Svetlana Stalin, books on Stalin's terror like those by Robert Conquest, Western studies of Soviet history, such as the biographies of Stalin by Adam Ulam or Ronald Hingley, writings by Soviet survivors of the Stalin epoch like Nadezhda Mandelshtam or dissidents like Andrei Sinyavsky. Six years before the fateful date, Orwell's fear in *1984* that humanity may be deprived of its memory through the manipulation of history is not really likely to materialize.

In the East the picture of Stalin has been subject to historiographical reappraisal of quite a different kind. Its outcome may have been the official silence on the anniversary, but nonetheless Stalin received sympathetic treatment in recently published memoirs by the Minister of

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Foreign Trade, Nikolai Patolichev, and the mention of Stalin's name by the Minister of Defence, Marshal Dmitry Ustinov, at the Army Day meeting in the Kremlin Palace of Congresses brought a burst of applause from the 6,000 officers present.

None of the type of writings first mentioned has, of course, ever been published in the Soviet Union. The Soviet leaders may not be quite able to implement completely Orwell's dictum that "He who controls the past, controls the future"; but they know that if they do not try, they will lose not only the future but the present as well.

SOVIET historiography remains the eighth wonder of the world. Bending the historical evidence did not begin with Stalin, though the surrealistic falsification of historical facts has certainly reached "yawning heights" under him. But the "memory hole" technique certainly did not end with him and his treatment in Soviet history books under his successors is a vivid illustration of this. Under Stalin, as the late Bertram D. Wolfe put it:

> Party historiography was in a steadily deepening crisis. Histories succeeded one another at a faster and faster rate, as if they were being consumed by a more and more irritable gigantic chain smoker who lit the first page of each new work with the last page of the old. . . . The heroes of one work became the dubious weaklings of the next and the villains and traitors of the third; persons of one work became unpersons in the next. . . .[1]

It is only the publication in 1938 of the celebrated "Bible of Stalin's era," *The Short Course on the History of the CPSU*, which stopped this particular "chain-smoking" for the next 15 years.

The first new Party history under Khrushchev (published in 1959) was only a pale shadow of his "secret speech." Stalin was of course dethroned, he had made "mistakes" and "violated Leninist norms of Party life," but apart from his mistaken idea about the sharpening of the class struggle during the "construction of socialism," there was no indication of his wrong-doings. Even the murder of Kirov was given the (slightly attenuated) old Stalinist twist. Only in its second edition (published in 1962, a year after the 22nd "de-Stalinization" congress) was there a sharply different treatment of Stalin. It not only dropped the wild panegyrics about him contained in the *Short Course*, but admitted mass repressions under him during which "leading Party and government officials and military men" had perished. It did not, of course, explain the nature of these repressions or provide a true picture of the scope of Stalin's Great Terror. But if the Moscow Trials remained taboo, Kirov's murder no longer was.

> The assassination of Kirov had a most adverse effect on the life of the Party and the state. It was committed under the cult of personality. Stalin used it as a pretext for reprisals against persons

[1] Bertram D. Wolfe, *An Ideology in Power* (London, 1969), p. 296.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> unacceptable to him. Many arrests took place as a result. It was the beginning of wholesale repressions and flagrant violations of socialist legality.[2]

The announced investigation of the crime has never been concluded, but it was revealed later in *Pravda* (7 February 1964) that Kirov was a candidate of a group of Party leaders who planned to replace Stalin, thus suggesting a motive.

The same edition of the Party history re-wrote (falsely) Stalin's role during the war and (less falsely) put the blame on him for the "excesses" of the forcible collectivization.

UNDER Brezhnev the process of denigration of Stalin has been reversed. The book by Alexander Nekrich (now at Harvard) revealing Stalin's responsibility for Soviet unpreparedness for the Nazi attack on 22 June 1941 was condemned and withdrawn. The attacks on the de-Stalinizers, the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial, the fulsome homage in *Pravda* (26 February 1966) to his henchman Zhdanov—all these worrying pointers induced several Soviet notables to make an appeal to Brezhnev against rehabilitating Stalin. But although there was no complete rehabilitation, his image was being restored, the "de-Stalinizing" historians were attacked, references to repressions, arrests and deaths resulting from them disappeared from print, even phrases like "the Personality Cult" and "the Era of Errors and Distortions" have become unacceptable in spite of their euphemistic timidity.

In 1969 Stalin was described in *Kommunist* (No. 3) as "a prominent figure of the CPSU and the Soviet State" and "a fighter for the working class." An article in *Pravda* (21 December 1969) commemorating the 90th anniversary of his birth played down his defence blunders and moved in earnest towards restoring his name as a great war leader. The three Brezhnev editions of the Party history (1969, 1971, 1976) made an increasingly radical break with the Khrushchevian 1962 version and re-wrote it quite thoroughly. Criticisms of Stalin were either left out or became paltry; the references to the collectivization and the purges were discreetly reformulated (in the last two editions the Red Army purge in the 1930s is no longer mentioned); credit is given to Stalin for his role in the war and he is praised as a "theoretician and great organizer."[3]

The Kirov episode has been gradually brought back to a slightly retouched *Short Course* variant. Instead of the Khrushchev innuendo implicating Stalin in the crime, it is now said to have reminded the Party and the Soviet people "once again of the need to increase revolutionary vigilance" (which is the old Stalinist watchword). And

[2] *Istoriya Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza* (Moscow, 1962), p. 486.

[3] The late Marshal Vasilevsky explained in *Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal* (No. 2, 1978) that "historical interests of our socialist motherland justify Stalin's policy to avoid providing Germany with the pretext for unleashing war. His fault was that he did not draw the line beyond which such a policy became not just unnecessary, but dangerous."

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the 1976 edition has dropped altogether even the emasculated reference to "violations of socialist legality" after Kirov's assassination which was still being printed in the 1969 and 1971 editions.

In short, the picture of Stalin has been refurbished quite fundamentally under Brezhnev.

IT is against this background that one should read the accompanying essay. I wrote it at the end of 1962 at the height of Khrushchevian de-Stalinization, shortly after the publication of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and of the second edition of Isaac Deutscher's biography of Stalin. I was fresh under the impact of *One Day* . . . and it was just at a time when I persuaded an American publisher to produce an English translation of Solzhenitsyn's novel (for which Max Hayward and I provided an introduction). It was then that I wrote the essay on Deutscher. But it was never printed. I may perhaps be permitted to explain the circumstances.

My essay—reproduced below—is the second part of a study which I published in April 1962 in *Survey* (No. 41). It criticized quite sharply Deutscher's writings, mainly his journalism. At the end of it there was an announcement that there would be a continuation of the study which would deal with his historical works.

After the appearance of the first essay I received a letter from Mr Deutscher's solicitor threatening me with a libel suit and demanding an apology. I consulted several lawyers. After grilling me on the subject they advised me that there was no case to answer. Accordingly I refused to budge. Mr Deutscher, after a sharp exchange of correspondence, did not implement his threat and did not issue the threatened libel writ.

But when I wrote the second part my lawyers advised me not to publish it. The publication of the second article might suggest "a deliberate campaign to destroy Deutscher's reputation." I could not understand this reasoning, in view of the fact that the first article already contained the advance announcement about the forthcoming publication of the second. But legal technicalities are beyond the comprehension of a mere mortal; and it was impractical to try to straighten the issue by a transatlantic correspondence. I was then a Senior Fellow at Columbia University in New York, and I had other things to do. So I postponed publication.

WHEN I eventually returned to London I was again busy with other matters. I harboured the idea of publishing it but then Isaac Deutscher suddenly died (in Rome on 19 August 1967, at the age of 60) and I saw no point in engaging in posthumous polemics. I therefore put the article aside and did not think about it until some 11 years later, when in a conversation the Editor of *Encounter* suggested to me the idea of publishing it at long last on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Stalin's death. I put together the pages of the original text with some difficulty, and it is reproduced here without

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

updating (which I have tried to provide in this introduction) and with no textual changes whatsoever.

ALTHOUGH the Stalin era (and the Soviet epoch in general) are by now no longer "a mystery wrapped in enigma" for the Western public, the ability and readiness to draw lessons from them are far from impressive. "Progressive" stereotypes and myths about the Soviet Union are no longer what they used to be, yet Western understanding of the Soviet phenomenon is not all that much better. This applies in particular to the question of the Soviet attitude to truth and facts. The number of examples in historiography which illustrate the general Soviet mendacity is legion.

Recently Boris N. Ponomarev headed (for the second time) the delegation of Soviet "parliamentarians" visiting the USA (he also had talks not long ago with the UK Prime Minister, James Callaghan). In April 1978 he attended the Socialist International conference on disarmament in Helsinki. He lectured there on the "peaceful policy" of the Soviet Union.[4] He is the Party ideological spokesman on such matters as dissidents and Eurocommunism. Like the head of the KGB, Andropov, Ponomarev is concerned with disinformation (but unlike Andropov, he is only a Candidate Member of the Politburo). He is the head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU and as such officially in charge of Soviet relations with the foreign communist parties. He is the embodiment of official Soviet double-think and double-talk. Whether his Western parliamentary or socialist "colleagues," who consider him an *interlocuteur valable* at *détente* parleys, realize all this or not, they are likely to be blissfully unaware of another title to glory of Mr Ponomarev. He is the Grand Vizier of Soviet historical falsification, a Talleyrand of Soviet historiography. He epitomizes the Soviet customary perversion of truth and window-dressing in matters of the past as in matters of the present, and the two are inextricably linked.

He began his career by helping Vilgelm G. Knorin in writing a Party history in the 1920s. When, in the words of Bertram Wolfe, "histories, and a little later historians, were disappearing without trace," Knorin's work suffered the usual fate and he himself was shot afterwards as "a Gestapo agent." But that is not what happened to Boris

[4] Cf. *Kommunist*, No. 7, May 1978, pp. 38–50.
At the December 1962 meeting of Soviet historians Ponomarev used a quotation from Lenin to say that Party-mindedness requires historical analysis to be based on "a foundation of precise and indisputable facts". In a *samizdat* historical review, *Pamyat* (reproduced by Chronicle Press, New York, 1978), L. Nadvoitsky demonstrates how the book published in 1974 by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, *Lenin: A Collection of Photographs and Movie Stills*, which allegedly includes all the photographic material on the subject" in existence—with the exception of 53 photographs—uses the old "memory hole" technique: eliminating the "unpersons" and systematically "masking out" from the photographs the unrehabilitated "enemies of the people" (Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, *et al*). Some of these doctored photographs were reproduced in the article by Christopher Hitchens, "Mutilating Russia's photographic history", *New Statesman*, 1 Sept. 1978.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ponomarev. He flourished under Stalin (whom he probably helped with Professor Yudin in the preparation of the *Short Course*). He flourished under Khrushchev for whom he prepared the two versions of the "de-Stalinized" Party history. And he flourishes under Brezhnev for whom he revised it radically by producing the three new editions of it in which Stalin is partially rehabilitated. He is, in fact, the chief editor of all five divergent editions of the post-Stalin Party history! This is something even beyond George Orwell's imagination.

But should one really complain that too few learn from the past? One must remember that the intellectual *cognoscenti* "upstairs" influence the rank-and-file "downstairs." In May–June 1976, the *New Left Review* on whose editors Isaac Deutscher was so seminal an influence introduced a new editorial section "Memories for the Future." It explained that

> the Left—despite the importance it habitually attaches to the experience of this past [i.e. of the 1920s and 1930s] . . . has too often neglected this precious and dwindling inheritance of memory. At best, it has concentrated exclusively upon the great names—and erratically at that. Of course, the account given by major participants, in memoirs or interviews, can be invaluable. But the testimony of less central figures is often equally illuminating—and may at times even be more reliable.

To make up for it, the *New Left Review* published extracts from David Wilson's autobiography, *Living in My Time*. The memoir of this "ordinary Labour man" is indeed illuminating, but perhaps not in the way intended by the *New Left Review*.

In it, Wilson describes his encounter with Prince Dmitri Svatopelk-Mirsky, who had fought with the Whites against the Soviets, became a refugee and taught Russian Language and Literature at London University. Their encounter was a turning point for Mr Wilson (who eventually joined the Communist Party), and he eloquently expresses his gratitude to Prince Mirsky:

> He had come to accept the rightness of the revolution for the Russian people and wished to help the Soviets in any way he could.
>
> On Sunday morning we had a long walk and, for me, an interesting discussion. He asked me how I saw the political situation, and in course of this I told him of the dread I had of the power of the press to mould the minds of people and to create opinion. He said "Oh yes, of course. Bourgeois opinion" and seemed puzzled at my fears. It was quite extraordinary that at that moment it was as though the scales dropped from my eyes. Until that very moment I had always thought that the capitalist press could create working-class opinion, and the thought had obsessed and frightened me. And here was this Russian aristocrat for whom it was simply an observed fact that the English bourgeois press could instil bourgeois opinion into the British proletariat; but of course they could not create proletarian opinion. It seemed quite simple to him. Since then I have read with profit everything that I have

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been able to get by Mirsky in English. He eventually went back to Russia, and what became of him I do not know, but I owe him a step in my mental development.

The subsequent fate of Prince Mirsky is, of course, well known. He did not enjoy for long the truthful proletarian features of the Soviet press.[5] He was arrested during the Great Purge and with countless others—an aristocrat among the people—perished in the Gulag Archipelago of Stalin's forced labour camps. So much for the *New Left Review*'s history lessons for those who want to use memories for the future!

In his autobiographical *Chronicles of Wasted Time* (1973), Malcolm Muggeridge recollected Prince Mirsky in Moscow:

> Mirsky never discussed with me how he felt about having returned to the USSR as a Soviet citizen. It was obviously an act of great imprudence, and it was clear that he disliked living in Moscow, and having to associate with other Soviet penmen. In London his position had been quite comfortable; as a crossed-out prince he had an assured social position both in upper-class and intelligentsia circles, besides being welcome at working-class gatherings. Even—perhaps particularly—the Communists were glad to have a prince with them on the plinth in Trafalgar Square when they assembled there. In Moscow he was completely at the mercy of the authorities. I don't, of course, know whether he ever meditated trying to escape, but once, when we happened to be looking at a map together, his finger moved to Batum, on the Turkish frontier, and stayed there. I never heard for certain what happened to him, but know that he was arrested and taken off, either to be executed or to die in a labour camp. The ostensible cause of his fall from favour was, it seems, an article he had written on the occasion of the centenary of Pushkin's death in 1937. Following what he supposed to be the Party Line, he wrote of Pushkin as a court lackey and toady. Alas for him, the Line had changed, and Pushkin had been reinstated as a national hero. So, it turned out, Mirsky was liquidated for denigrating Pushkin—a delectable example of Fearful Symmetry, whose cruel whimsicality may have appealed to his own savage temperament. When I heard how his fall had come about, I recalled Luciani's [the *Temps* correspondent] remark about him [that Mirsky had pulled off the unusual feat of managing to be a parasite under three regimes—as a prince under Tsarism, as a professor under Capitalism, and as an *homme-de-lettres* under Communism]; of his three essays in parasitism, it was the last that had proved the most hazardous and exacting. . . .

ONE of my own personal reminiscences throws an even sharper light on the relationship between the communist historical and mental development.

[5] Shortly after the *New Left Review* printed Mr Wilson's piece of autobiographical wisdom, the *Journalist*, the organ of the National Union of Journalists published (in August 1976) an article by Alice Barstow, "The Soviet Press—A Weapon of Democracy." It elicited a vigorous protest in its correspondence columns.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In 1940 I became friendly with the Soviet film-maker Alexie Kapler. He wrote scripts for some films in a series of movies which presented the history of the revolution and of the civil war according to the historiography of Stalin's *Short Course*. Among them were such films as *Lenin in October, Man with Arms, Lenin in 1918, The Unforgettable 1919*, etc. Stalin discussed Kapler's scripts with him personally. Kapler was perfectly aware that the *Short Course* was a concoction of lies, historical fabrications, and surrealistic distortions; but, needless to say, he did what Stalin "suggested" to him. In our own conversations he was quite cynical about it. His was not a case of "double-think"; he was conscious of the falsification of history involved in his work. But when I met him some 25 years later in London he was in some respects a changed man. He retained his pleasant qualities and warm personality. But what had happened to his cynicism, or scepticism, or critical awareness?

His personal history might have accounted for his rather unusual evolution. He had received prizes and privileges from Stalin for his work, but he was sent in 1943 to the Vorkuta concentration camp—because of his romance with Stalin's daughter, Svetlana.[6] He spent more than 11 years in the Gulag Archipelago and was "rehabilitated" after Stalin's death. When I saw him again he stressed his political loyalism, and he implored me "not to write slanders about the Soviet Union."

Some 12 years later, during a visit to Shanghai, I noticed that a local Chinese cinema was showing a Soviet film. A member of the Shanghai Revolutionary Committee who was accompanying me explained that it was the 60th anniversary of the "October Revolution" and China had decided to commemorate it by showing in all the cinemas 10 Soviet feature films on early Soviet history. They included *Lenin in October, Man with Arms, Lenin in 1918, The Unforgettable 1919*, etc. This, he explained to me, was being done because these films were banned in the Soviet Union. So it was necessary to prevent the falsification of history by Soviet "revisionists" who do not want to show the true picture of the Soviet past. He obviously believed it. I felt that the ghosts of Kafka and Pirandello in a surrealistic embrace had been hovering over the scene.

WE live in an age of polycentric surrealism. When Paul Neuberg, the producer of the 1978 British TV series, "Stalin—the Red Tsar", was searching for copies of *Lenin in October, Lenin in 1918*, and *The Unforgettable 1919*, he discovered to his surprise that all the copies of these faked "documentary" films had actually been *re-faked*, and the new versions could therefore not provide relevant material. As *The Guardian* (12 August 1978) reported:

[6] Svetlana, with whom I was in touch at the time, excluded (when she came to the West somewhat earlier) a number of references to Kapler from her book. But Kapler did not know of this act of reticence on her part until the book was published later. His own behaviour was personally decent. For instance, as eye-witnesses testify, he went out of his way to help his fellow prisoners in the Vorkuta prison camp. (Cf. Antoni Ekart, *Vanished Without Trace*, London, 1954).

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> He found versions in Paris, Brussels and Stockholm, as well as in London. But all versions had been censored in the 1960s to remove references to Stalin. Mr. Neuberg claims that there are now no original prints with any public archive or distributor in the West. He had been obliged to go to private sources for a complete print.
>
> He was first alerted to the censoring last summer in a British film archive while viewing *Lenin in 1918*. He knew the original version featured Stalin prominently.
>
> " The chief purpose of this film was to portray Stalin in the role of Lenin's right-hand man in the period of revolution and the civil war. You can imagine our amazement when, by the end of reel three, it was clear he had been entirely cut."
>
> *Lenin in October* contained a scene of actors portraying Lenin and Stalin walking through a crowded hall and on to a platform. The Stalin character had been excised from the scenes—but since the actor could not be removed from the platform without losing a vital scene, the film had been re-processed to put the figure of a sailor between the camera and the platform, blocking out the actor playing Stalin.
>
> According to Mr. Neuberg, the censoring was easy enough to execute, as none of the Western archives or distributors held master prints or negatives of the films, only prints. When the prints began to deteriorate, the Russians offered new versions.

In 1954, after the fall of Beria, the subscribers to the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia* received from its publishers an instruction recommending that they should replace, " using scissors and glue ", an entry on Beria by an entry on the Behring Straits, conveniently provided on a newly-printed page. Even though, as in the case of Beria, the purpose of the film-erasures was also falsification, the new rearrangement of reality acually happened to involve a removal of an historical fraud and not just a creation of an " unperson ".

BUT what can one make of a prominent English historian whose mind is still so much in the grip of the mythical stereotypes formed in Stalin's time that they condition his perception even today? For A. J. P. Taylor, the bogey of a " Riga correspondent " sending his anti-Soviet false dispatches about the situation in Russia to the " bourgeois press," is still luridly alive. In the *New Statesman* (12 February 1978), Professor Taylor wrote the following about some BBC-TV programmes on China :

> I remark from the BBC series that correspondents in Hong Kong are as qualified to judge China as those in Riga were qualified to judge Russia in the inter-war years.

Yet again Muggeridge's memoirs are apt

> . . . at that time the paper [*The Times*] had no correspondent in Moscow and relied on the reports of a man named Urch in Riga. Anyone who had the curiosity to look up Urch's dispatches would find that they maintained a high level of accuracy and reliability; certainly by comparison with [Walter] Duranty's, so prominently

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> displayed in the columns of the *New York Times*. Again one marvels at the almost mystical importance attached to the location of a newsgatherer as distinct from the truthfulness of the news sent.
> . . . if the *New York Times* went on all those years giving great prominence to Duranty's messages, building him and them up when they were so evidently nonsensically untrue, to the point that he came to be accepted as the great Russian expert in America, and played a major part in shaping President Roosevelt's policies vis-à-vis the USSR—this was not, we may be sure, because the [*N.Y.*] *Times* was deceived. Rather, because it wanted to be so deceived, and Duranty provided the requisite deception material. Since his time, there have been a whole succession of others fulfilling the same role—in Cuba, in Vietnam, in Latin America.

Evidently neither Khrushchev's "secret speech" nor Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* made any difference to A. J. P. Taylor's mind-set. Evidently, if you were a "correspondent in Riga" you told lies—even if history subsequently proved that honourable journalists had been reporting facts and truths.

Professor Adam Ulam once wrote [7]:

> We who study Soviet affairs have—why try to conceal it—a skeleton in our filing cabinets. To describe this skeleton let me invoke a fictitious case of two fictitious characters, *X* and *Y*. In his attempt to learn as much as possible about the Soviet Union, *X*, between roughly 1930 and 1950, read nothing but the works of reputable, non-communist authors. He grounded himself on the writings of the Webbs and Sir John Maynard. Turning to the American academicians, he followed the studies of the Soviet government, law, and various aspects of Soviet society which might have come from the pen of a professor at Chicago, Harvard, Columbia or Williams. This serious intellectual fare would be supplemented by the reading of the most objective non-academic experts on Russia, and finally of those few journalists who had no axe to grind, especially the ones who had spent a long time in the Soviet Union.
>
> His friend *Y* had an equal ambition to learn, but his taste ran to the non-scholarly and melodramatic. Indifferent to objectivity, he would seek the key to Soviet politics in the writings of the avowed enemies of the regime, like the ex-Mensheviks; he would delight in the fictional accounts *à la* Koestler or Victor Serge. Sinking lower, *Y* would pursue trashy or sensational stories of the "I was a Prisoner of the Red Terror" variety. He would infuriate *X* by insisting that there were aspects of Soviet politics which are more easily understood by studying the struggle between Al Capone and Dan Torrio than the one between Lenin and Martov, or the dispute about "socialism in one country."
>
> Which of our fictitious characters would have been in a better position to understand the nature of Soviet politics under Stalin?

Alas, true characters are stranger than fictitious ones. A. J. P. Taylor still has not learned who was telling the truth, for even now he implies

[7] *Survey*, No. 50, January 1964.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that the reports of the "Riga correspondents" about Stalin's murderous reign were just anti-Soviet slander.[8]

THE 25th anniversary of Stalin's death provided a focus on the problems involved in all the esoteric points of historical interpretation. Our Western public still does not fully realize that the vicissitudes of communist historiography are concerned with vital Party concerns, its current policies and legitimacy, and that ultimately they bear upon its ideological identity and its attitude to reality itself. That is why a critique of the interpretation of the significance of the Stalin era and the highlighting of the events in it which have proved to be particularly sensitive for communist historiography are important. My essay on Isaac Deutscher is, I hope, not just an exercise in pedantry. It retains, I believe, contemporary relevance, particularly as Deutscher's book still exercises a considerable influence on the readers who may not have "heightened consciousness"—this applies especially to the New Left generation. Many of its "true believers" reacted to Deutscher in the same way as David Wilson did when "the scales dropped" from his eyes on encountering Prince Mirsky and his writings. Like Deutscher himself, they are "critically" sympathetic to both Trotsky and Stalin. They do not realize how trapped they are in a no man's land between Soviet historiography and Deutscher's hagiography.

In his *The Prophet Outcast* (which is the subject of my final study), Deutscher quotes approvingly Trotsky's prediction that the monuments which Stalin had built himself

> will be pulled down or taken into museums and placed there in chambers of totalitarian horrors. And the victorious working class will revise all the trials, public and secret, and will erect monuments to the unfortunate victims of Stalinist villainy and infamy on the squares of a liberated Soviet Russia.

This is, to be sure, strong language. Deutscher himself did not use it in his biography of Stalin (only after his death did he introduce "the Borgia perspective"). But *no* monuments were erected to Stalin's victims during the 25 years since the demise of the old tyrant. Its anniversary coincided with the 40th anniversary of the Bukharin trial (which took place between 2 and 13 March 1938 and which was completely disregarded not only in the Soviet but, with one or two exceptions, such as the Italian liberal

[8] A. J. P. Taylor approvingly reviewed in *The New Statesman* (13 Jan. 1978) the book *Shattered Peace* (Andre Deutsch, 1978) by the young American historian, Daniel Yergin, for whom what he calls "the Riga axioms" (i.e. the "counter-revolutionary" image of the Soviet Union) are the basis of his indictment of the post-war American foreign policy. Thus the old stereotype is perpetrated by the new generation of "progressives." Ironically, A. J. P. Taylor's *ideé fixe* does not save him from abuse by other Old Believers in the myth about the "Riga correspondents." Reviewing Taylor's *Introduction* to the Penguin edition of John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World*, Andrew Rothstein dismissed it in the Communist *Morning Star* (11 Apr. 1977) as "14 pages of misinformation."

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

daily *Il Giornale* and the communist *l'Unità*, also in the Western press).[9] In the Soviet Union Nikolai Bukharin has not been rehabilitated. Nor of course has Leon Trotsky. Instead of monuments to his glory, the victim of Stalin's assassin [10] in Mexico has been given a treatment which reaches even more absurd lengths than Stalin's own *Short Course*.

IN the second volume of his novel, *The Eternal Appeal* (1978) the Soviet author Anatoli Ivanov now claims that it was Trotsky who instigated the Great Purge in the 1930s. Together with his Gestapo masters, he manipulated the honest Chekists who were murdering innocent communists and other Soviet citizens. It was Trotsky who prepared the demonic plan: "We will physically annihilate people who are most loyal to Soviet ideology . . . in all walks of life."

According to Ivanov, Trotskism presented a terrible threat, of which

[9] The case of Bukharin has been raised by the Communist Party historian, Paolo Spriano who wrote in *l'Unità* (16 June 1978) that there was "a sacrosanct necessity" to rehabilitate the victims of the Moscow trials, after the son of Bukharin, Yuri, wrote a letter to Berlinguer appealing to him to intervene on behalf of his father's honour (it was originally published in *La Republica* on 22 June 1978, and in English in *The New York Times* on 7 July 1978 and in *Tribune* on 14 July 1978). The Italian communist senator Umberto Terracini addressed the Italian, French, Spanish and English Communist Parties with a plea that they should declare the Moscow 1938 trial of Bukharin as a case of "simple assassination," and called for the rehabilitation of Bukharin. The appeal was also made by several other West European communists and left figures (including the British Communist Party industrial organizer, Mick Costello).

These various appeals were initiated by The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation (cf. Ken Coates, *The Case of Nikolai Bukharin*, 1978). According to Zhores Medvedev, it was Maurice Thorez who persuaded Khrushchev not to rehabilitate Bukharin. This seems unlikely, but whatever the case, the position of the PCF on the problem of rehabilitation of the victims of the Moscow Trials and Stalin's terror, although not as explicit as that of the PCI, has been implicitly modified. For instance, on 26–27 July 1978, *l'Humanité* published extracts from the memoirs of the Mexican Communist Valentin Campa about Trotsky's assassination which squarely put the blame for it on Moscow. On 4 September 1978 Francis Cohen, the editor of *La Nouvelle Critique*, referred in *l'Humanité* to Trotsky and Bukharin as "important personalities who have not yet been rehabilitated in the USSR."

On 15 August 1978 the *Morning Star* published an article by Dennis Ogden, "Duty to the Truth about Bukharin," which made the unprecendented admission that the

> three great "purge trials" . . . were the public manifestations of a wave of mass repressions which sent millions from every walk of Soviet society of death or the labour camps . . . [Thus, unlike Deutscher, the communist paper came to acknowledge the historical magnitude of the Stalinist genocide by referring to millions, and not just thousands, of its victims—L.L.] Many of the victims of the purges . . . remain in the shadows. One of the most prominent of these is Bukharin. Like that of Trotsky, his role in Soviet history, is misrepresented or ignored in Soviet publications.

In the meantime, Soviet historians continued to denounce "Trotskyite falsifications of history" and some of them still extolled the *Short Course*, in which they said, "the principled evaluation by Stalin of the sabotage by the Trotskyites in the field of the history of the Party and of the October Revolution had important political significance" (N. N. Maslov and Z. V. Stepanov, *Ocherki Istochnikovedeniya i Istoriografii Istorii KPSS*, Leningrad, 1974).

[10] After his release from the Mexican prison, Ramon Mercader received a high decoration in the Soviet Union. It was recently reported that he died in Cuba, but *Der Speigel* claimed that he is "still alive and living in Moscow".

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Great Purge was evidently only a foretaste. The Soviet Union was only saved from its menace by the indomitable Stalin.

The novel was published in the mass-circulation *Roman-Gazeta* (No. 2, 1978) as well as in book form (first printing: 1,600,000 copies).

But if the rehabilitation of Deutscher's hero, Trotsky, has not occurred in the East, the first biographer of his anti-hero, Stalin, has been "rehabilitated" in the West. Boris Souvarine's classical book on Stalin has been re-issued in France 40 years after its original appearance and received praise in the French "progressive" journals which ignored him disdainfully for close to half a century. Now suddenly it appears that he was right all along. He is hailed as a pioneer of "the whole demythification process" (as Sam White put it in the *Evening Standard*).

For Deutscher in his historical dialectics Stalin and Trotsky were, somehow, *both* right. In fact he himself was profoundly wrong about both antagonists. It was Souvarine who was right in his perspective on Stalin. But Deutscher dismissed Souvarine in a contemptuous reference, writing that Trotsky "preserved in his prose—as one preserves insects in amber—the names of quite a few scribblers who would otherwise be forgotten . . ." Am I, in publishing my old essay, preserving the name of a "scribbler" who is being forgotten? Or should I have left my own pages "in amber"? Let the reader decide.

Deutscher as Historian and Prophet, II

Leopold Labedz

> *Il faut avoir soin d'éviter toute réaction parlant de la Révolution, aucun homme ne pouvait s'y opposer. Le blame n'appartient ni à ceux qui ont péri ni à ceux qui ont survécu. Il n'était pas de force individuelle capable de changer les éléments et de prévenir les événements qui naissaient des choses et des circonstances.*
> Napoleon charging his minister of police with the task of supervising historians (1808).

> *Les vrais habiles se donnent le masque du désintéressement.*
> Julien Benda on historians in *La Trahison des Clercs* (1928).

TEN years after Stalin's death his role in history is being rewritten in the Soviet Union. Not only has his body been removed from the mausoleum, his pictures withdrawn, his monuments destroyed, and his name erased from enterprises and places; the new edition of the Party history[1] has shifted from a regretful to a generally hostile attitude towards him. In the circumstances, Mr Deutscher's political biography of

[1] *Istoriya Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza* (2nd ed., Moscow, 1962).

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stalin [2] looks like the only remaining and the most persuasive historical justification for the actions of his hero.

It is therefore somewhat ironical that while the "heirs of Stalin" are taken to task in *Pravda*, his Western biographer seems to repeat after Horace: "*Exegi monumentum aerae perennius*". ["*I have erected a monument more durable than bronze*"]. In the recent new edition of his book,[3] Mr Deutscher declares that he was always confident that his interpretation of Stalin and Stalinism would stand the test of time, and that although "a great deal of fresh documentation has become available" since the first edition, "on the whole I *do* stand by the interpretation of Stalin and Stalinism given here."

As a prophet Deutscher claimed: "Far from refuting my prognostications, events have confirmed them." [4] As an historian he echoes the sentiment: "This new documentation, however, far from contradicting the story as I have told it, amply confirms it." Thus, whether about the future or about the past, Deutscher *ha sempre ragione* [is always right] and the subsequent evidence only seals the verdict. An historian is less exposed than a prophet because he does not have to anticipate the facts, but only to reconstruct and select them. In his interpretation, however, he can fit them into a predetermined pattern in which the past is as inevitable as the future. In such a scheme evidence, old or new, is of limited relevance only and serves as an illustration for a *roman à thèse*.

For this he does not need any new illustrations, particularly such as could introduce a jarring note into the old text. The facts for which the late dictator is now being condemned are not exactly new to him. He did not have to wait for the Smolensk archives, and certainly not for the new Soviet Stalinography, to learn about them. At the time of his writing there was in the West an abundant literature on the subject. Since then it has grown still further and is now coming to the surface in the Soviet Union itself; but Mr Deutscher shows little inclination to elaborate upon this aspect of Stalin's reign.

A reader of *Stalin* would look there in vain for more than a cursory reference to such an historic Stalin institution as the forced labour camps. In Deutscher's "historical perspective" the fate of the millions rotting in them deserved no more than a few sentences in a 600-page book. Now that a Soviet author has published a story in *Novyi Mir* [1962] describing it in detail, the contrast with the attitude of our free historian is particularly telling. And Deutscher's treatment of the subject is not only extraordinarily brief, but also hazy and misleading.

He does not refer to the development of the Stalinist *univers concentrationnaire* during the two decades preceding the publication of his book. He reduces it there to two instances only: forced labour "imposed

[2] I. Deutscher, *Stalin, A Political Biography* (Oxford University Press, 1949).
[3] I. Deutscher, *Stalin, A Political Biography* (Vintage Russian Library, 1960). All quotations unless otherwise indicated are from this edition.
[4] Cf. *Survey*, No. 41, April 1962, p. 129.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on peasants who had resorted to violence in resisting collectivisation," and the deportations in the spring of 1935, after the assassination of Kirov, of " tens of thousands of suspect Bolsheviks, Komsomoltsy, and their families " from Leningrad and other cities who " filled prisons and concentration camps." A reader unfamiliar with the subject would hardly suspect that it was not only the peasants " who had resorted to violence " who were deported to the North, that apart from them and the " suspect Bolsheviks, Komsomoltsy, and their families " there were millions (not thousands) of the inmates of the forced labour camps who did not belong to these categories. However, although both time and magnitude of the grim NKVD empire are blurred, " objectivity " is carefully preserved:

> Soviet penitentiary reforms of earlier years, inspired by humanitarian motives, viewed the imprisonment of criminals as a means to their re-education, not punishment. . . . Amid the famine and misery of the early thirties the provisions for their protection were completely disregarded. " Re-education " degenerated into slave labour, terribly wasteful of human life, a vast black spot on the picture of the second revolution.

This is all Deutscher has to say about Stalin's prison camps. He contrasts the " humanitarian " penal practice under Dzerzhinsky and Menzhinsky with its " degeneration " under Yagoda, and attributes it to the famine of the early 1930s, without mentioning that this famine was caused by Stalin's own forcible collectivization. And although later the conditions of the camp inmates had not improved, even though the famine had passed, and the camps became an important part of the Stalinist system, there is nothing more on the subject in Deutscher's book.

He completely glosses over subsequent mass-deportations, which included entire nationalities, and which were swelling the prison camps long after the " second revolution." For those deriving their information about Stalin's deeds from this biographer, some of the post-Stalin rehabilitations must be rather unexpected, as so many of his victims were not even mentioned by Deutscher. It would also be impossible to realize from this source the inhumanity of the camps when Beria (Deutscher's future " liberal ") was in charge, described so vividly, though with restraint, in Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich.*

Ironically enough, its author began his sentence before Deutscher's story ends. It was in 1949, while Solzhenitsyn was involuntarily " collecting material " in the camp for his novel, that the biography of his gaoler who " undertook to drive barbarism out of Russia by barbarous means " appeared. Its easy formulations and flying phrases appealed not only to the prejudiced and the unwary, but also to many people of good will who mistook its special pleading for objectivity. It has also evoked, as Deutscher notes, a " passionate resentment and hostility." This he deplores. But it is more clear than ever before that his book not only undermined resistance to Stalin, but through its main thesis was in effect, even if not in intention, reassuring Stalin that, being an agent of

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

history, he was on the whole doing only the historically inevitable in using forced labour in the process of industrializing Russia. And, being a chosen instrument of history, he did not have too many scruples about the means used: Djilas testifies in his *Conversations with Stalin* [1952] that cruelties " did not worry him one bit, for he was convinced that he was executing the judgment of history."

In this last respect, in fact, Stalin shared his biographer's view, and although he needed no reassurance, it must have been pleasant to have his actions presented as the verdict of history by an " objective historian " who also believed that *die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht.* He had a job to do, given to him by history itself, and, unlike his biographer, he could not afford to be squeamish about it.

If it was too early for the tribunal of history, whose " judgment " was still uncertain, the roles were already indicated. The despot was " progressive " and the historian not only disinclined to be a " hanging judge," but in effect quite ready to overlook a good deal of the existing evidence in his assessment of the case. However, the victim had not yet been admitted to the witness stand, and, as could have easily been predicted, he was less interested than Deutscher in the " historical perspective," shaped as it was by the disembodied abstractions of a teleological theory, rather than by the real fate of flesh-and-blood humanity. Solzhenitsyn, the witness, was concerned with Ivan Denisovich, who had suffered in the camps. Deutscher, the historian, had his perspective in common with Yosif Vissarionovich, who had created them.

LEV TOLSTOY noticed that with the passage of time everything in the past begins to seem inevitable. This " deterministic effect " clashes with the realization of choices—political, social, existentialist—with which we are faced in our actions before they are taken. The paradox is heightened when a deterministic theory of history is linked with a call to action. In so far as the theory is influencing its field of perception, it becomes a self-fulfilling or a self-destroying prophecy.

But it is still confronted with historical facts, which do not correspond to its expectations. Faced with this, Marxist historians who have to interpret them can even declare such facts irrelevant to the basic propositions of Marxism. Deutscher, for instance, says [5]:

> I cannot see the importance for the validity, or otherwise, of the materialist dialectic and of historical materialism of the fact that the development of the class struggle in the West has not confirmed some of the optimistic expectations of Marx, Engels, or Lenin.

But a much more important role in Deutscher's method of argumentation is played by the " deterministic effect " in a perception of history. Falling back upon it he introduces his " historical perspective," which he uses as a mask for political evaluation. He created it synthetically when Stalin was still alive, and when, as he himself puts it in the new edition of his

[5] *Nuovi Argomenti*, No. 57/58, 1962, p. 64.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

book, "we had none." At that time the outcome of the political battles being fought was still in the balance, events were decided on a day-to-day basis, and evaluated by contemporary actors, but Deutscher already knew that "Stalin belongs to the breed of the great revolutionary despots, to which Cromwell, Robespierre, and Napoleon belonged."

This was rather flattering to Stalin, as none of these historical figures, whatever their misdeeds, engaged in systematic genocide. Cromwell had his Ireland, Robespierre his Madame Guillotine, and Napoleon his Duc d'Enghien, but none of them was associated with crimes of an order and magnitude comparable to Stalin's. None of them resembles the man who was responsible for the Grand Guignol of the Moscow Trials, the horrors of the *Yezhovshchina,* the mass-deportations, starvation, the death of the anonymous millions who perished in all these Vorkutas and Kolymas, the death sentences on children, the execution of prisoners of war in Katyn, and the innumerable other crimes committed on his account. To use Deutscher's language, to give "full value" to his work, "history" has quite a lot more to "cleanse" after Stalin than it had after Cromwell and Napoleon.

But whatever theoretical construction one puts on it, barbarism is barbarism, and history is not a detergent. The "full value" of Stalin's work is not much appreciated nowadays. Deutscher washes whiter than Clio allows. His anthropomorphic language only obscures the realization that "history" cannot "cleanse" anything. Stalin's victims are in their graves, millions of them unknown, and they cannot be raised from the dead. And a moral restitution involves not an historical apologia, but an unequivocal condemnation.

BOTH the Khrushchevian and Deutscherian interpretations of Soviet history admit Stalin's merits. Deutscher, of course, demands a full rehabilitation of the communist opposition and Khrushchev has not done this. But, on the other hand, since the 22nd congress, Soviet pronouncements on Stalin are already more damning than Deutscher's own.

In Soviet historiography "progress" is attributed to the Party and Stalin is said to have "seriously hampered it."[6] Deutscher "dialectically" related his "retrogade" and his "progressive" features and is acclaimed for his "objectivity" in the "bourgeois press."

But the difference between the two versions of history is not just one of focus, it is also one of the degree of blame put on Stalin. Deutscher is more inclined to put the blame on "history" *tout court.* It is therefore surprising that, having prematurely identified his own perspective with the "historical perspective," and his own political verdict with the "verdict of history," he should declare in the introduction to the new edition of *Stalin* that "the historical perspective in which we can now view Stalin is perhaps still too short."

It is indeed not entirely unrealistic to imagine that, when the anti-

[6] *Istoriya Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza* (Moscow, 1962), p. 505.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stalin campaign no longer serves a politically advantageous purpose, when the cries of the victims have lost their immediacy, and the next generation of Party bureaucrats is no longer personally involved in Stalin's crimes, the time may come for his rehabilitation, for a measured assessment of his contribution to the might of the Soviet state. Should such a situation ever arise, Deutscher's biography of Stalin, with its "bourgeois objectivism," will be on hand and could easily be used for such a revaluation. The Tolstoyan "deterministic effect" will by then really come into its own, the passage of time may blunt indignation and make the crimes appear inevitable or statesmanlike. No generation is really very much concerned with the horrors of the past; and although they are registered in the memory of humanity, they are not comparable with the horrors of the present. We all look at St. Bartholomew's Day and the Smyrna atrocities with a much greater degree of detachment than did their contemporaries.

But, if Deutscher's book may serve for Stalin's rehabilitation in the future, just as it served as an adroit apologia in the past, its philosophy of history may not be entirely adequate for that future purpose. Because, if it should ever happen, it will be more influenced by Russian patriotic attitudes, which are alien to the "internationalist" Deutscher, than by the abstractions of revolutionary theory applied by a member of that almost extinct species, the cosmopolitan Jewish intelligentsia. With the advent of communist polycentrism, the historical parallels are more likely to be again figures from the Russian past, Ivans and Peters, rather than Deutscher's Cromwells and Robespierres.

It is a melancholy thought, however, that, whether the omelette is national or international, the broken eggs will not necessarily loom large. There may be something in Deutscher's "historical perspective": Genghis Khan is, after all, a national hero of modern Mongolia.

THE selection and presentation of historical facts should, in Deutscher's frequently used phrase, be made *sine ira et studio*, but this lofty prescription is not followed in his historical writings.

An historian need not be impartial to be objective, but to qualify as such he must fulfil certain demands. He must use all sources and not disregard those which do not happen to fit his preconceived ideas. He must keep his bias within reasonable limits and in selecting his material be ready to learn from it and not only to use it for the benefit of his scheme. Intuitive understanding is necessary, but it is not a sufficient condition; omissions must not be blatant and imaginative creation should not replace evidence. In short, there is a distinction between the work of an historian and the work of an historical writer, between a study and a piece of fiction, however well written.

IF it is necessary to restate such platitudes, it is because Deutscher's historical works often fall short of such minimum requirements. To begin with, his sources on the Russian revolution are heavily one-sided.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In line with his political sympathies, he relies almost entirely on Bolshevik accounts or on Trotsky's version. One has only to glance at the bibliography of the sources to which he refers in *Stalin* to see that, with very few exceptions, the non-communist sources, Russian and foreign, are conspicuously absent, and that even Stalin's own masterpiece of historical falsification, the celebrated *Short Course* of Party history, now securely buried, is still listed among the "sources," although it is clear, now as before, that not a single line in this "definitive version" of Stalinist history can be used as an historical reference, but itself has to be checked against genuine sources.

Deutscher is, of course, entitled to his general ideological bias. Even now the history of the French Revolution is still subject to formidable partisan re-interpretations. Ever since Napoleon gave his instructions on how it should be approached (and his angle not unnaturally coincided with Deutscher's own) French historians have continued their battle of re-interpretation, from Michelet through Aulard to Lefevre. But no respectable historian discussing the French Revolution can look at it through a strange combination of Babouvist and Napoleonic spectacles, and then maintain that this restricted view entitles him to claim objectivity. And yet this would be a counterpart to Deutscher's approach to the Russian revolution and its aftermath. He does not refer at all to the non-Bolshevik material on it (such, for instance, as has been used by Haimson, Treadgold, Keep, or Schapiro). He disregards completely writings by Mensheviks (except Dan), Social Revolutionaries, and Kadets. He has not consulted, or pays no attention to, various non-Bolshevik documents, ranging from papers by Axelrod to tsarist police records, which are deposited in various libraries all over the world (such as the Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, Columbia University Butler Library in New York, Hoover Library at Stanford and the Library of Congress in Washington). He establishes his credentials by making a sanctimonious reference to Western writers and memoirists on the Second World War: "I hope that in using their evidence I have made sufficient allowance for inevitable bias." However, such primary data as the German Foreign Office documents, published in the book of Zeman and Hahlweg, are not worthy of mention in the new edition of *Stalin*.

In his enthusiasm, Deutscher even implies in one place that the victory of the February revolution (which, he says, "came from the people itself"), should be attributed to the Bolsheviks. He begins an imaginary conservation between Stalin and the last Tsar with the words "Surely you were defeated not by the war itself, but by the Bolshevik party." A more accurate impression of the subject can be found in C. P. Melgunov, *Martovskie Dni 1917 goda*. Among secondary sources, Deutscher does not even mention the two volumes by W. H. Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution*, published in 1935. There are only two footnotes to Souvarine's pioneering work on Stalin, although clearly Deutscher must be indebted to it.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But perhaps the greatest defect of Deutscher as historian is his talent as *littérateur*. There is everything to be said for an historical study which is well written. But if this happens only rarely, it is because the literary mind is not well adapted to the utilization of fact in historical setting, the criteria of literary creation being quite different from the criteria of historical studies. The historical truth and the "artistic truth" do not necessarily coincide. The first obligation of an historian is accuracy. Not dramatic effect, not wistful improvisation, not tidiness in constructing a story, and not a passionate expression of hope, despair, or even of inner understanding, but the cool and sceptical discovery of evidence. Unless he distinguishes between fact and supposition, not after deliberation but as a mental habit, his literary flair will betray him; and the line between history and fiction will be blurred.

THIS is precisely the case with Deutscher. He started as a poet and he has a tendency to dramatize history, to present it in a series of effective juxtapositions—historical metaphors—to give it literary colour, and all these gifts, which could be splendid in a good historian, are dangerous in one who uses them as substitutes for sober evaluation. His revolutionary romanticism leads him to project himself on to the "scene" of history with which he identifies himself. There the revolutionary *manqué* can strike all the attitudes for which real history offered him no chance. He can identify himself with the actors without genuinely appraising their roles and without really caring much about the wider drama which, as in Marx, involves the masses in the audience, and not as in Carlyle just the stage. He can compensate his early fixations with *la révolution intrahisable*, by an eternal love of hypostasis and by histrionics. In short, writing history can be a compensation rather than a vocation.

This, perhaps, is a lesser evil. We have had in our time enough unaccomplished painters and schoolteachers, seminarists and poet/philosophers who have projected their frustration in the opposite direction, from *vita contemplativa* to *vita activa*. It is Deutscher's seductive style which to some extent accounts for the success of his books. The style carries with it the emotional exaggerations, the flights of imagination, and the metaphorical confusion which makes them more often than not historical fiction, which, indeed, is stranger than truth.

IT is impossible to analyse in detail all the inaccuracies in the Stalin biography, just as it is impossible to analyse in detail the connexion between Deutscher's style and his historical method. Such textual analysis would require several pages for every one written by Deutscher. But a combination of his literary assets and historiographical liabilities can be illustrated by a fairly representative example. Here, for instance, is how he describes Stalin's "second revolution":

The whole experiment seemed to be a piece of prodigious insanity,

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> in which all rules of logic and principles of economics were turned upside down. It was as if a whole nation had suddenly abandoned and destroyed its houses and huts, which, though obsolete and decaying, existed in reality, and moved, lock, stock, and barrel, into some illusory buildings, for which not more than a hint of scaffolding had in reality been prepared; as if that nation had only after this crazy migration set out to make the bricks for the walls of its new dwellings and then found that even the straw for the bricks was lacking; and as if then that whole nation, hungry, dirty, shivering with cold and riddled with disease, had begun a feverish search for the straw, the bricks, the stones, the builders and the masons, so that, by assembling these, they could at last start building homes incomparably more spacious and healthy than were the hastily abandoned slum dwellings of the past. Imagine that the nation numbered 160 million people; and that it was lured, prodded, whipped, and shepherded into that surrealistic enterprise by an ordinary, prosaic, fairly sober man, whose mind had suddenly become possessed by a half-real and half-somnambulistic vision, a man who established himself in the role of super-judge and super-architect, in the role of a modern super-Pharaoh. Such, roughly, was now the strange scene of Russian life, full of torment and hope, full of pathos and of the grotesque; and such was Stalin's place in it; only that the things that he drove the people to build were not useless pyramids. In his own mind he saw himself not as a modern Pharaoh, but as a new Moses leading a chosen nation in the desert.

What *can* one do with this type of history writing? Count the number of *omissio veri?* Or of *suggestio falsi?* Point out that Deutscher *knows* what was happening in Stalin's mind, " suddenly possessed by a half-real and half-somnambulistic vision "? That he attributes to the *whole nation* motives and initiatives which were not there? That he confuses Don Quixote and Sancho Panza? How *can* such a style be related to historical facts?

And would not such an anti-histrionic demonstration seem ungenerous, just as Deutscher's own high-handed generalizations about what ultimately are individual sufferings seem morally insensitive, if historically imaginative? We are all strong enough to stand up to other people's sufferings, particularly if our historical heroics can be done at a distance. To fortify ourselves we only have to repeat after Pope, " Whatever is, is right," or after Hegel, " Whatever is real, is rational," or after Marx, " History never puts on its agenda the tasks which cannot be accomplished."

Yet in no case are flights of imagination a substitute for evidence in the biographies of historical personalities. Deutscher's work reflects his Immaculate Conception of the revolution, which underlines everything he writes.[7] As for any true believer, it is all a matter of faith and conversion, one way or another.

[7] " I do not see how the revelations about Stalin's crimes can convert anybody, except persons vacillating under the shock, to believe in private property or in the Immaculate Conception, Deutscher in *Nuovi Argomenti,* No. 57/58, 1962.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In this light it is possible to understand the special meaning he attaches to such expressions as historical objectivity and writing *sine ira et studio*. His scientific model is Lenin, that "critical student in the laboratory of thought" who pursued research "with an open and disinterested mind" (*Stalin*, p. 118). It is not surprising that with such an idea of scientific disinterestedness Deutscher wrote his book the way he did. In his mind Leninist *partiinost* coexists with "bourgeois objectivity," and his own partisanship with the claim to be *au dessus de la mêlée*. In the new introduction to *Stalin* he writes:

> Although, or rather because, I had written my book as an outsider to the cold war and refused to echo the battle cries and shibboleths of the two camps, my book implicitly made a hash of this notion; and so inevitably it became involved in the cold war and became the crusader's target. *Habent sua fata libelli.*

Mr Deutscher is mistaken in thinking that his *Stalin* is an objective or impartial work because it was criticized both by the *Daily Worker* and by Dr Franz Borkenau. For the conflict with Borkenau was fundamental, whereas the dispute with the *Daily Worker*, however bitter, was a kind of family quarrel within the common Leninist heritage. What Leninist, after all, has not been attacked at one time or another by the *Daily Worker*, especially in Stalin's days? If Mr Deutscher's book aroused so much passionate resentment and hostility (as he notes in his 1960 introduction) this had to do not so much with what he said; after all there were far more emphatic apologies for Stalin published at the time, but none tried to pass as an objective study by a detached scholar. What antagonizes so many foreign observers of Russia is not only Soviet reality but also the persistent attempts to embellish that reality, to declare it the best of all possible worlds. In a similar way, Deutscher's *Stalin* minus the pretence of objectivity would almost certainly have created much less resentment.

THE biography of Stalin was published at the height of the "cult of [Stalin's] personality" in the Soviet Union. The summit of historical sycophancy had been reached. *Pravda* was carrying lengthy panegyrics for months on end to celebrate his 70th birthday. Tito was already excommunicated, and the Moscow Trials were being exported to the countries of Eastern Europe. Internally, Zhdanovism reigned supreme and the NKVD was taking care of the rest.

Faced with this situation, a free historian chose to elevate its creator to a certain sinister dignity and sombre grandeur. That was his right: historians do not just collect information, they have also to use their powers of interpretation and imagination. But it is not only a matter of taste and bias. Admitting the necessity of interpretation, and hence of the inevitable bias of the historian, there remains a certain minimum of rigour without which history would not only be "a tale told by an idiot" but simply a fictional tale.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Some facts can be established and there is no room for argument about them. There is a difference between bias and inaccuracy, and this is particularly important in the context of Soviet historiography. Confronted with a falsification of history on an unprecedented scale, the suppression of facts and the creation of myths on a conveyor belt by state-historians, it is not just an elementary duty of the historian to be pedantic about the facts, he has to re-establish the truth.

In this respect too Deutscher's work falls short. Not only because of his tendency to mythologize through his interpretative flights of imagination, but also because he is often wrong about "primary facts." These lapses are not conscious distortions, but arise from his ideological obsessions. He was caught between his own cult of history and the contemporary "cult of personality," and the result was that many facts acquired a slant which helped to shape the Stalinist myth from the outside while it was being synthetically elaborated from within.

This was pointed out at the time, in a long memorandum to which Deutscher refers in the introduction to the new edition of *Stalin*, by David and Boris Shub, who accused him of a "multitude of inaccuracies." Deutscher says that the supporting quotations were "torn out of context or crudely distorted" but does not dispute the actual charges. He dismisses them high-handedly as an "underhand attack" and a "comic incident," which could have had some effect only in "the political climate of the time."

But no amount of obfuscation and one-upmanship will change the fact that the inaccuracies in *Stalin* are no more acceptable in the post-Stalin climate of opinion than at the time when Deutscher's subject was committing his own "errors and distortions." Deutscher's cloak of objectivity conceals not only a definite political tendency but serious scholarly deficiencies as well, which often makes his presentation of facts misleading. His historical technique often corresponds to his journalistic technique. As a counterpart to his eavesdropping at the meetings of the Presidium we have *historia arcana* whose only basis is Deutscher's imagination. In neither role does he indicate that his statements are guesses, and what may or may not be considered excusable in a journalist dealing with the current scene is certainly not pardonable in the writing of history. Two instances can be quoted: Deutscher's treatment of the Kirov and the Tukhachevsky affairs.

THE Kirov murder, which unleashed the wave of terror and served as a prelude to the Great Purge, is described with the confidence of one who has full knowledge of the circumstances of the case:

> The quasi-Liberal spell was suddenly interrupted when on 1 December 1934 a young oppositional communist, Nikolayev, assassinated Sergei Kirov in Leningrad. Stalin rushed to Leningrad and personally interrogated the terrorist in the course of many hours. He established that the assassin had belonged to a small group of young communists embittered by the oppressive atmosphere in the

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> country. . . . He probably also found out that it was Kirov's liberalism that enabled the terrorists to gain access to his offices in the Smolny Institute. . . . He drew the conclusion that the time for quasi-Liberal concession was over.

The source for this version is given: it is Stalin's own *Short History of the CPSU*, which in fact does not contain all the details given above. Some of them are invented independently by Deutscher, who in fact knew no more than anybody else what had actually happened. Among other signs of the "quasi-Liberal spell" Deutscher mentions the renaming of the GPU as the NKVD, and the nomination of Vyshinsky as Attorney-General. As to the circumstances of the murder, he simply repeats the official Stalinist case, without so much as hinting that there might be some doubt about its authenticity, and without indicating that his own presentation of it is pure guesswork. He must have heard of other versions, some of which attributed Kirov's murder to Stalin. There was the thesis of his murdered hero in *Bulletin Oppozitsii*, where Trotsky put forward some of the speculations which much later were reinforced by Khrushchev's admission in his "secret speech" that "the circumstances of Kirov's murder hide many things which are inexplicable and mysterious and demand a most serious investigation." But on this occasion Deutscher preferred to suppress the voice of his murdered hero and give the version of his murderous anti-hero who was still alive. A grand historical synthesis requires a dramatic treatment, in which the certainty of details and qualifications about their reliability are unnecessary academic paraphernalia. Trotsky's and Nikolaevsky's speculations were known when *Stalin* was first published (both *Bulletin Oppozitsii* and *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik*, where they appeared, are in Deutscher's bibliography); Khrushchev's remarks on the subject were made long before the appearance of the second edition. They are passed over in silence.

At the 22nd congress Khrushchev made even more explicit allusion to Stalin's responsibility; and the new edition of the Party history reiterates that "the circumstances of the case are still being clarified." Thus we have a somewhat ironical situation: while Soviet readers are no longer compelled to read Stalin's own presentation of the case, the Western readers of Deutscher's new paperback edition are still today learning the "established historical facts" about the Kirov affair in their unadulterated Stalinist version.

ON the Tukhachevsky affair Deutscher admits that "the exact circumstances of Tukhachevsky's plot and of its collapse are not known," but he has no doubt about its existence:

> The real conspiracy was begun by the leaders of the army, Tukhachevsky and his associates. . . . All non-Stalinist versions concur in the following: the generals did indeed plan a *coup d'état* . . . Tukhachevsky was the moving spirit of the conspiracy.

"All non-Stalinist versions" referred to turn out to be three references

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the footnote, of which two are highly unreliable and the third, Krivitsky's *I Was Stalin's Agent*, has no page reference, which is not surprising as Krivitsky not only does *not* "concur," but directly contradicts Deutscher's version. General Krivitsky in fact describes how "Stalin's scheme to 'frame' Tukhachevsky and the other generals had been set in motion at least six months before the alleged discovery of a Red Army conspiracy" (p. 234).

The use of a reference which proves quite the contrary is not exactly an approved scholarly custom. But Deutscher goes further. He does not disclose that Tukhachevsky's name was mentioned 11 times in an exchange between Vyshinsky and Radek at Radek's trial on 24 January 1937. This was a sure sign that Stalin had begun to draw his net round the Soviet Marshal, just as those implicated in the earlier Moscow trials were the next on the list of victims for the subsequent trials. Neither does he mention Krivitsky's allegation that the "evidence" against Tukhachevsky was fed to the Gestapo through the OGPU agents in the Tsarist emigré organization and then fed back to Russia through Czechoslovakia. This is a version partly confirmed by Hoettl, Schellenberg, and Churchill's memoirs, and referred to by Khrushchev at the 22nd congress (although he doubtless had more direct sources), and by Gomulka at the IX Plenum of the Polish Communist Party. Tukhachevsky has now been declared "a loyal son of the motherland" and a victim of "unjustified repression" (*Red Star*, 24 March 1962).

Khrushchev's historiography cannot, of course, be taken at face value any more than Stalin's; but it is clear that even now the case remains highly conjectural, and was even more so when *Stalin* first appeared. Deutscher committed the double offence of presenting a pro-Stalinist version as the anti-Stalinist version, and of treating it as an established fact:

> The men who tried to put an end to Stalin's rule, Tukhachevsky and his associates, acted behind the back of the people, as a small, strictly secret group of conspirators. Therein lay their fatal weakness. . . . *

THE Kirov and Tukhachevsky affairs are examples of Deutscher writing as if he knows when he does not. But he also has the opposite tendency of being more cautious than the available evidence permits and when the benefit of his doubt is all *ad usum Stalini*. Such, for example, is the case of the Katyn massacre on which Deutscher writes that "there were reasons to suspect that the Germans themselves, who were then putting millions of people to death, might have been guilty of the deed." This statement sounds reasonable enough to a reader who may not know that at the time it was writen there was *already* a formidable body of evidence in Polish (and thus available to Deutscher) which indicated clearly that this particular crime should not be attributed to Hitler but to Stalin.

Other examples of Deutscher's misleading technique are legion. Thus,

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Unimpeachable Sources"

* Let me add (in 1978) a few remarks on the preface to the 1967 subsequent, edition of *Stalin*, in which Deutscher wrote:

> It is possible . . . that my account of the Tukhachevsky affair, may need some revision; but if so, Khrushchev and his successors have not provided the elements necessary for such a revision, despite the fact that they have rehabilitated Tukhachevsky and cleared him of the charge that he plotted against Stalin in Germany's interest, as Hitler's agent. In my account of the affair I emphatically refuted that accusation; but I related a version drawn from unimpeachably anti-Stalinist sources (quoted in a footnote on p. 380), according to which Tukhachevsky planned a *coup* against Stalin, in order to save the army and the country from the insane terror of the purges. This version may be mistaken; but Khrushchev and his successors have not revealed a single document or a single fact that would throw light on the affair and allow us to dismiss altogether the anti-Stalinist accounts which insisted on the reality of the plot.

This self-exculpation shows the typical traits of Deutscher's self-righteousness: unwillingness to admit error, retrospective verbal apologetics, artful fact-twisting.

The footnote on p. 380 contains references which are anything but "unimpeachable" or are even all "unimpeachably anti-Stalinist". As noted above, Krivitsky's account is precisely opposite to what Deutscher claims it is. Krivitsky wrote that Stalin "plotted the extermination of the High Command of the Red Army . . . long before [he] 'suddenly' discovered a Red Army plot against his power", that he "used fake 'evidence' imported from Germany and manufactured by the Nazi Gestapo in his frame-up of the most loyal generals of the Red Army".

Of the other two sources quoted, one, E. Wollenberg, *The Red Army* (1938) can hardly be treated seriously as evidence. The author maintained (pp. 239–247) that "according to reliable sources of information there was actually a plan for a 'palace revolution' and the overthrow of Stalin's dictatorship by forcible means". The plot was headed by Gamarnik and Tukhachevsky. The plan (fixed for the middle of May 1937) was that the Red Army units were to break the resistance of the GPU troops commanded by Marshal (*sic*) Yagoda, occupy the Kremlin, and restore "the Soviet democracy". But the conspirators were arrested in the early weeks of May and "promptly shot". Thus not only were they prevented from seizing power, but also from carrying out "the foreign political programme of the Tukhachevsky-Gamarnik group" which consisted of "the activization of the Soviet foreign policy in dealing with Japanese imperialism and German and Italian fascism and promoting the Socialist World Revolution." Wollenberg did not disclose his "reliable sources of information" and his allegations are unsupported by any proof.

Deutscher's third source, an article by M. Bobrov, published in *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik* in 1947 has even less claim to credibility. *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik* published in September, October and November 1947 three articles by M. Bobrov. The last of them was accompanied by an editorial note stating that "much in the views and conclusions expressed in them is wrong or not demonstrated, as we will try to explain in our reply to the author". In the subsequent, December 1947 issue, the editor of *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik*, R. Abramovich, wrote that Bobrov "uses the word, 'plot' in a specifically GPU sense", that "one does not know where he got his information", and that "it is difficult to know how much truth there is in all this". So much for Deutscher's "anti-Stalinist" accounts of the Tukhachevsky affair! But there is even more to it. In 1962, the other editor of *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik*, Solomon Schwartz, explained to me that the editors regretted the publication of these articles because they discovered that they were written (under a pseudonym) by a shady character whom they suspected of being a Soviet *agent-provocateur*.

Such are the "unimpeachable" sources which are the basis of Deutscher's version of the Tukhachevsky affair, a version which after all was left unchanged in the last, 1967, edition of *Stalin*.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stalin's distrust of the old intelligentsia is explained in terms which match his own accusations:

> Old technicians and administrators viewed his projects with cool scepticism and even open hostility. Some sided with one or the other opposition. A few persisted in an attitude of defeatism which led them to obstruct or even to sabotage the economic plans.

This innuendo could easily be used to justify the trial of the Mensheviks (which Trotsky condemned in his exile), of the Industrial Party, or even the Moscow Trials which Deutscher so eloquently denounced.

His writing technique also includes what might be called a "double treatment," i.e. a presentation of an unfavourable item followed by a softening of it by a philosophical ratiocination, some form of qualification, or a plain misstatement of fact. Stalin's Great Purge is summarized thus:

> It is not necessary to assume that he acted from sheer cruelty or lust of power. He may be given the dubious credit of the sincere conviction that he did serve the interest of the revolution and that he alone interpreted those interests aright.

Indeed, it is difficult to see how it could have been otherwise; both for himself and for Deutscher Stalin was an instrument of history itself. He embodied the Marxist historical necessity in his ruthlessness, and in his alleged bursts of liberality. When in 1939 the Great Purge had come to an end, "the statutes of the party were amended in a quasi-Liberal spirit." It was just then that Beria was appointed (replacing Yezhov) and Beria was to become in Deutscher's phrase "a liberal chief of police" after Stalin's death.

Stalin's callous role vis-à-vis the Warsaw anti-Nazi uprising of 1944 can hardly be discerned in Deutscher's biography. His description of this historical episode is wrapped up in all kinds of circumlocutions and allowances, including the statement that the uprising was "unexpected." As a matter of historical fact the Soviet-sponsored radio in Polish appealed for weeks on end to the inhabitants of Warsaw to rise in revolt.

BUT the most deceptive elements in Deutscher's writing technique are the historical metaphors. He is ready to produce them, like rabbits out of a magician's hat, on any occasion. They usually centre around the French revolution, but sometimes they stray to other periods. They are as suggestive as they are misleading.

Not only Cromwell, Robespierre, and Napoleon, but also Tsar Alexander, the Iron Chancellor Bismarck, and even Pope Alexander Borgia—all serve to explain the inevitability of Stalin. And so does Marx:

> In spite of its "blood and dirt," the English industrial revolution —Marx did not dispute this—marked a tremendous progress in the history of mankind. It opened a new and not unhopeful

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> epoch of civilization. Stalin's industrial revolution can claim the same merit.

Soviet industrialization has many common features with other processes of industrialization, but it also differs from them in important respects. Some of its economic features may be comparable; but its political, cultural, technological and demographic background is *sui generis*. However, a sweeping historical metaphor takes care of all these peculiarities. A glance at the Time-table of History—obviously privately revealed to Deutscher—is supposed to dispel any doubts about the progressive character of the Stalinist method of industrialization:

> It is argued against it that it has perpetrated cruelties excusable in earlier centuries but unforgivable in this. This is a valid argument, but only within limits. Russia has been belated in her historical development.

Deutscher does not care to explain what these "limits" are, but in another of his historical comparisons he stresses that Stalin was not all that unique.

> As an inspirer of revolution from above, Stalin does not stand alone in modern European history. He takes his place by the side of Napoleon and Bismarck, from whom in other respects he differs so much.

But the "differences" are not emphasized, and the analogy is extended to foreign policy:

> It is mainly in Napoleon's impact upon the lands neighbouring France that the analogy is found for the impact of Stalinism upon Eastern and Central Europe.

Is there really an "analogy" between—say—Scharnhorst and the recently rehabilitated Traicho Kostov or between Andreas Hofer and the unrehabilitated Nikola Petkov? (At least, neither Scharnhorst nor Hofer ever needed rehabilitation. . . .)

Napoleon-Stalin liberating Poland from the Tsar Alexander imperceptibly changes into Alexander-Stalin who subjugated it:

> The complaints of British and American negotiators about Stalin's capriciousness may still be best expressed in Byron's words about Alexander:
>
> *Now half dissolving to a liberal thaw*
> *But hardened back whene'er the morning's raw . . .*
> *How nobly gave he back to Poles their Diet*
> *Then told pugnacious Poland to be quiet.*
>
> It is curious how the analogy can be extended from major issues down to details.

These details do not include the suppression of the democratic parties in Eastern Europe. Deutscher admits that when during the war the Polish issue was negotiated by Stalin, his granting of "testimonials

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of good democratic conduct was extremely grotesque." But this is immediately followed by a remark that " it would be wrong to describe Stalin's action as mere trickery, strong as was the element of trickery in it," because (apart from other reasons) " he undoubtedly believed that what he did served a profoundly democratic purpose. . . ."

However, " only after the war was the Bolshevik in Stalin to reassert himself so strongly as to efface Alexander's likeness. . . ." By then his " eyes were fixed primarily on revolutions in Warsaw, Bucharest, Belgrade, and Prague." The revolutions were not there, but they can always be exported " on bayonets " for progressive purposes! In the Baltic countries, Stalin " had no intention of tampering with their social system " and it was only his sense of danger after the collapse of France which " impelled him to stage revolutions in the three small countries." And after the war

> The gradual integration into the system of planned economy of several small and medium-sized countries, most of which had been industrially more developed than Russia before the thirties, promised to quicken the tempo of Russia's as well as of their own reconstruction. The first condition of that integration was that communism should be in power in the countries concerned. In treading this path Stalin tacitly admitted that the productive forces of the Soviet Union revolted, to use Trotsky's favourite expression, against its national boundaries.

With this Marxist argument for Soviet imperialism, it is not quite clear whether it was Napoleon or Alexander in Stalin who propelled him in all these actions. But internally, once the war was over—

> Stalin's effort to restore moral supremacy of the party was coupled with his endeavour to re-establish the party outlook as against the nationalist mood of the preceding years.

This was not easy, particularly as Stalin was soon to launch the " Russia First " campaign in which it was stressed that " Popov " invented almost everything, from radio to penicillin. Deutscher notes that at that time " millions of former forced labourers returned home from a long sojourn in Germany," but does not mention that after their return they were deported to the Soviet forced labour camps (like the Buchenwald inmate, Senka Klevshin, in Solzhenitsyn's novel). He stresses instead—

> the abolition of capital punishment, the quasi-Liberal modification of the criminal code, the emphasis on *habeas corpus* and on the rule of law, and a number of other post-war reforms.

The reason for this was apparently that Stalin-Alexander remembered Stalin-Napoleon. He knew that the Red Army soldiers saw foreign countries during the war and this generated in them " a yearning for freedom and a curiosity which the government was ill-equipped to satisfy." Stalin decided to have these " quasi-Liberal " reforms because he was aware of—

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> the sequel to the ferment which arose in the army of Alexander I from its contact with Europe. Barely a few years after the victory over Napoleon the Tsar's officers' corps was riddled with secret societies, formed by men whom the observations of life abroad had induced to fight for reform at home. After Alexander's death those secret societies prepared and staged the Decembrist rising of 1825, the forerunner of a long series of revolutionary convulsions.

Having been subjected by Deutscher to so many retrospective reincarnations, the reader is not surprised that the Bolshevik in Stalin reasserted himself not only against Alexander but also against Napoleon; and he dismissed Zhukov.

ALL these historical metaphors were used when Stalin was alive. After his death they were supplemented by another one, shifting the parallel from Alexander I, the head of the Russian Orthodox church, to Alexander VI, the head of the Roman Catholic church. In a debate organized by the Italian journal, *L'Espresso*, Deutscher declared: [8]

> To speak about the influence of Stalinism on Russia and upon the international communism is much more complicated than to speak for example about the influence of the Borgias' period on international Catholicism and upon Italy. There is however, a certain vague similarity between the two historical situations, in so far as we, the Marxists, never believed that it would be possible to have in our movement a "period of Borgias." And yet we did have it. If one wants to push the analogy still further, we can find a precedent also for Khrushchev, considering that after the death of Alexander VI there was a phase devoted to the "liquidation of the crimes of the Borgias."

The Italian Communist Party leader, Giancarlo Pajetta, was evidently not over-impressed by this reasoning, and he replied somewhat ironically:

> The parallel between Stalin and Borgia does not seem to me too well founded, even if the analogy may have some brilliant aspects. From the point of view of the Marxist analysis it is devoid of all significance. The Church before Alexander VI was certainly not dominated by followers of the apostolic communism, nor afterwards did we have popes who wanted to restore the primitive Christianity of the evangelical epoch.

The moral seems to be that neither the Cult of History nor the Cult of Personality offer right views on history or personality.

IT was not necessary to have an "historical perspective" to assess Deutscher's *Stalin*. Shortly after its publication many reviewers pointed out its methods and its political bias. Others however, like the anony-

[8] *L'Espresso*, 17 Dec. 1961.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mous reviewer in *The Times Literary Supplement* (10 June 1949), proclaimed that " until the coming of a new generation allows a new perspective to be attained, the present biography will not easily be superseded."

That new generation is evidently not yet with us, not even in the Soviet Union; still, Deutscher's book badly needs to be superseded, and now more than ever. Fourteen years have passed since its publication and today its perspective looks more twisted than before, its mistakes more glaring, its misconceptions more obvious; its whole tendency seems anachronistic. It was only with the progress of " de-Stalinization " that Deutscher finally thought of mentioning the " Borgia perspective." He had used the words " quasi-Liberal " or " semi-Liberal " with monotonous frequency to describe attitudes or acts of Stalin and Beria. If he stresses today the " critical " elements of his analysis, that only shows his dexterity. He is an historian whom his own Deity, the history, has proved wrong on so many points, but he goes on confirming his own rectitude [9]:

> I prepared *The Great Contest* for its first publication in the Winter of 1959-60. Subsequent events seem to me to have confirmed in all essentials my analyses and forecasts, even though these were concerned with the long-term prospects of Soviet policy rather than with immediate developments.

There is one apt remark in *Stalin*:

> The semi-intelligentsia from whom socialism recruited some of its middle cadres enjoyed Marxism as a mental labour-saving device, easy to handle and fabulously effective.

Deutscher contrasts with it a more refined form of " pristine " Marxism, but it still seems relevant to his own intellectual processes. In Deutscher's scheme the shining knights of the Leninist epoch were slain by the Dark Knight who performed a " progressive " work which will usher in an epoch when the pure faith in its " pristine " form will be restored and implemented. Many, though not all, deficiencies of Deutscher's political biography of Stalin derive from this infantile fixation.

It is a melancholy comment on our period, full as it is of gullibility, ignorance, and the corruption of standards, that a book of this sort with its political fantasies and scholarly shortcomings, could have been praised by famous men and even acclaimed by some as " a classic."

[9] Isaac Deutscher, *The Great Contest* (Ballantine Books, New York, 1961), p. 127.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marxism—A Summing-Up*

Leszek Kolakowski

MARXISM has been the greatest fantasy of our century. It was a dream offering the prospect of a society of perfect unity, in which all human aspirations would be fulfilled and all values reconciled. It took over Hegel's theory of the "contradictions of progress," but also the liberal-evolutionist belief that "in the last resort" the course of history was inevitably for the better, and that man's increasing command over nature would, after an interval, be matched by increasing freedom. It owed much of its success to the combination of Messianic fantasies with a specific and genuine social cause, the struggle of the European working class against poverty and exploitation. This combination was expressed in a coherent doctrine with the absurd name (derived from Proudhon) of "scientific socialism"— absurd because the means of attaining an end may be scientific, but not the choice of the end itself. The name, however, reflected more than the mere cult of science which Marx shared with the rest of his generation. It expressed the belief, discussed critically more than once in the course of the present work, that human knowledge and human practice, directed by the will, must ultimately coincide and become inseparable in a perfect unity: so that the choice of ends would indeed become identical with the cognitive and practical means of attaining them. The natural consequence of this confusion was the idea that the success of a particular social movement was a proof that it was scientifically "true," or, in effect, that whoever proved to be stronger must have "science" on his side. This idea is largely responsible for all the anti-scientific and anti-intellectual features of Marxism in its particular guise as the ideology of communism.

To say that Marxism is a fantasy does not mean that it is nothing else. Marxism as an interpretation of past history must be distinguished from Marxism as a political ideology. No reasonable person would deny that the doctrine of historical materialism has been a valuable addition to our intellectual equipment and has enriched our understanding of the past. True, it has been argued that in a strict form the doctrine is nonsense and in a loose form it is a commonplace; but, if it has become a commonplace, this is largely thanks to Marx's originality. Moreover, if Marxism has led towards a better understanding of the economics and civilization of past ages, this is no doubt connected with the fact that Marx at times enunciated his

* This is the Epilogue of Leszek Kolakowski's *Main Currents of Marxism*, Vol. III, which is being published by Oxford University Press. It is printed here by permission of the author and publishers.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

theory in extreme, dogmatic, and unacceptable forms. If his views had been hedged round with all the restrictions and reservations that are usual in rational thought, they would have had less influence and might have gone unnoticed altogether. As it was, and as often happens with humanistic theories, the element of absurdity was effective in transmitting their rational content. From this point of view the role of Marxism may be compared to that of psychoanalysis or behaviourism in the social sciences. By expressing their theories in extreme forms, Freud and Watson succeeded in bringing real problems to general notice and opening up valuable fields of exploration; this they could probably not have done if they had qualified their views with scrupulous reservations and so deprived them of clear-cut outlines and polemical force. The sociological approach to the study of civilization was expounded by writers before Marx, such as Vico, Herder, and Montesquieu, or contemporary but independent of him, such as Michelet, Renan, and Taine; but none of these expressed his ideas in the extreme, one-sided, dogmatic form which constituted the strength of Marxism.

At a result, Marx's intellectual legacy underwent something of the same fate that Freud's was to do. Orthodox believers still exist, but are negligible as a cultural force, while the contribution of Marxism to humanistic knowledge, especially the historical sciences, has become a general underlying theme, no longer connected with any "system" purporting to explain everything. One need not nowadays consider oneself or be considered a Marxist in order, for instance, to study the history of literature or painting in the light of the social conflicts of a given period; and one may do so without believing that the whole of human history is the history of class conflict, or that different aspects of civilization have no history of their own because "true" history is the history of technology and "production relations," because the "superstructure" grows out of the "base," and so forth.

To recognize, within limits, the validity of historical materialism is not tantamount to acknowledging the truth of Marxism. This is so because, among other reasons, it was a fundamental doctrine of Marxism from the outset that the meaning of an historical process can be grasped only if the past is interpreted in the light of the future: that is to say, we can only understand what was and is if we have some knowledge of what will be. Marxism, it can hardly be disputed, would not be Marxism without its claim to "scientific knowledge" of the future, and the question is how far such knowledge is possible. Prediction is, of course, not only a component of many sciences but an inseparable aspect of even the most trivial actions, although we cannot "know" the future in the same way as the past, since all prediction has an element of uncertainty. The "future" is either what will happen in the next moment or what will happen in a million years;

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the difficulty of prediction increases, of course, with distance and with the complication of the subject. In social matters, as we know, predictions are especially deceptive, even if they relate to the short-term and to a single quantifiable factor, as in demographic prognoses. In general we forecast the future by extrapolating existing tendencies, while realizing that such extrapolations are, always and everywhere, of extremely limited value, and that no developmental curves in any field of inquiry extend indefinitely in accordance with the same equation. As to prognoses on a global scale and without any limitation of time, these are no more than fantasies, whether the prospect they offer is good or evil. There are no rational means of predicting "the future of humanity" over a long period or foretelling the nature of "social formations" in ages to come. The idea that we can make such forecasts "scientifically," and that without doing so we cannot even understand the past, is inherent in the Marxist theory of "social formations"; it is one reason why that theory is a fantasy, and also why it is politically effective. The influence that Marxism has achieved, far from being the result or proof of its scientific character, is almost entirely due to its prophetic, fantastic, and irrational elements. Marxism is a doctrine of blind confidence that a paradise of universal satisfaction is awaiting us just round the corner. Almost all the prophecies of Marx and his followers have already proved to be false, but this does not disturb the spiritual certainty of the faithful, any more than it did in the case of chiliastic sects: for it is a certainty not based on any empirical premisses or supposed "historical laws," but simply on the psychological need for certainty. In this sense Marxism performs the function of a religion, and its efficacy is of a religious character. But it is a caricature and a bogus form of religion, since it presents its temporal eschatology as a scientific system, which religious mythologies do not purport to be.

WE have discussed the question of continuity between Marxism and its embodiment in communism, i.e. Leninist-Stalinist ideology and practice. It would be absurd to maintain that Marxism was, so to speak, the efficient cause of present-day communism; on the other hand, communism is not a mere "degeneration" of Marxism but a possible interpretation of it, and even a well-founded one, though primitive and partial in some respects. Marxism was a combination of values which proved incompatible for empirical though not for logical reasons, so that some could be realized only at the expense of others. But it was Marx who declared that the whole idea of communism could be summed up in a single formula—the abolition of private property; that the state of the future must take over the centralized management of the means of production, and that the abolition of capital meant the abolition of wage-labour. There was nothing flagrantly illogical in deducing from this that the expropri-

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ation of the bourgeoisie and the nationalization of industry and agriculture would bring about the general emancipation of mankind. In the event it turned out that, having nationalized the means of production, it was possible to erect on this foundation a monstrous edifice of lies, exploitation, and oppression. This was not itself a consequence of Marxism; rather, communism was a bastard version of the socialist ideal, owing its origin to many historical circumstances and chances, of which Marxist ideology was one. But it cannot be said that Marxism was "falsified" in any essential sense. Arguments adduced at the present day to show that "that is not what Marx meant" are intellectually and practically sterile. Marx's intentions are not the deciding factor in an historical assessment of Marxism, and there are more important arguments for freedom and democratic values than the fact that Marx, if one looks closely, was not so hostile to those values as might at first sight appear.

Marx took over the romantic ideal of social unity, and communism realized it in the only way feasible in an industrial society, namely, by a despotic system of government. The origin of this dream is to be found in the idealized image of the Greek city-state popularized by Winckelmann and others in the eighteenth century and subsequently taken up by German philosophers. Marx seems to have imagined that once capitalists were done away with the whole world could become a kind of Athenian *agora*: one had only to forbid private ownership of machines or land and, as if by magic, human beings would cease to be selfish and their interests would coincide in perfect harmony. Marxism affords no explanation of how this prophecy is founded, or what reason there is to think that human interests will cease to conflict as soon as the means of production are nationalized.

Marx, moreover, combined his romantic dreams with the socialist expectation that all needs would be fully satisfied in the earthly paradise. The early socialists seem to have understood the slogan "To each according to his needs" in a limited sense; they meant that people should not have to suffer cold and hunger or spend their lives staving off destitution. Marx, however, and many Marxists after him, imagined that under socialism all scarcity would come to an end. It was possible to entertain this hope in the ultra-sanguine form that all wants would be satisfied, as though every human being had a magic ring or obedient jinn at his disposal. But, since this could hardly be taken seriously, Marxists who considered the question decided, with a fair degree of support from Marx's works, that communism would ensure the satisfaction of "true" or "genuine" needs consonant with human nature, but not whims or desires of all kinds. This, however, gave rise to a problem which no one answered clearly: who is to decide what needs are "genuine," and by what criteria? If every man is to judge this for himself, then all needs are equally genuine provided they are actually, subjectively felt, and

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

there is no room for any distinction. If, on the other hand, it is the state which decides, then the greatest emancipation in history consists in a system of universal rationing.

At the present time it is obvious to all except a handful of New Left adolescents that socialism cannot literally "satisfy all needs" but can only aim at a just distribution of insufficient resources—which leaves us with the problem of defining "just" and of deciding by what social mechanisms the aim is to be effected in each particular case. The idea of perfect equality, i.e. an equal share of all goods for everybody, is not only unfeasible economically but is contradictory in itself: for perfect equality can only be imagined under a system of extreme despotism, but despotism itself presupposes inequality at least in such basic advantages as participation in power and access to information. (For the same reason, contemporary *gauchistes* are in an untenable position when they demand more equality and less government: in real life more equality means more government, and absolute equality means absolute government.)

If socialism is to be anything more than a totalitarian prison, it can only be a system of compromises between different values that limit one another. All-embracing economic planning, even if it were possible to achieve—and there is almost universal agreement that it is not—is incompatible with the autonomy of small producers and regional units, and this autonomy is a traditional value of socialism, though not of Marxist socialism. Technical progress cannot coexist with absolute security of living conditions for everyone. Conflicts inevitably arise between freedom and equality, planning and the autonomy of small groups, economic democracy and efficient management, and these conflicts can only be mitigated by compromise and partial solutions.

In the developed industrial countries, all social institutions for the purpose of evening out inequalities and ensuring a minimum of security (progressive taxation, health services, unemployment relief, price controls, etc.) have been created and extended at the price of a vastly expanded state bureaucracy, and no one can suggest how to avoid paying this price.

Questions such as these have little to do with Marxism, and Marx's doctrine provides virtually no help in solving them. The apocalyptic belief in the consummation of history, the inevitability of socialism, and the natural sequence of "social formations", the "dictatorship of the proletariat," the exaltation of violence, faith in the automatic efficacy of nationalizing industry, fantasies concerning a society without conflict and an economy without money—all these have nothing in common with the idea of democratic socialism. The latter's purpose is to create institutions which can gradually reduce the subordination of production to profit, do away with poverty, diminish inequality, remove social barriers to educational opportunity, and minimize the

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

threat to democratic liberties from state bureaucracy and the seductions of totalitarianism. All these efforts and attempts are doomed to failure unless they are firmly rooted in the value of freedom—what Marxists stigmatize as "negative" freedom, i.e. the area of decision which society allows to the individual. This is so not only because freedom is an intrinsic value requiring no justification beyond itself, but also because without it societies are unable to reform themselves: despotic systems, lacking this self-regulating mechanism, can only correct their mistakes when these have led to disaster.

Marxism has been frozen and immobilized for decades as the ideological superstructure of a totalitarian political movement, and in consequence has lost touch with intellectual developments and social realities. The hope that it could be revived and made fruitful once again soon proved to be an illusion. As an explanatory "system" it is dead, nor does it offer any "method" that can be effectively used to interpret modern life, to foresee the future, or cultivate Utopian projections. Contemporary Marxist literature, although plentiful in quantity, has a depressing air of sterility and helplessness, in so far as it is not purely historical.

THE effectiveness of Marxism as an instrument of political mobilization is quite another matter. As we have seen, its terminology is used in support of the most variegated political interests. In the communist countries of Europe, where Marxism is the official legitimation of the existing regimes, it has virtually lost all conviction, while in China it has been deformed out of recognition. Wherever communism is in power, the ruling class transforms it into an ideology whose real sources are nationalism, racism, or imperialism. Communism has done much to strengthen nationalist ideologies by using them to seize power or hold on to it, and in this way it has produced its own gravediggers. Nationalism lives only as an ideology of hate, envy, and thirst for power; as such it is a disruptive element in the communist world, the coherence of which is based on force. If the whole world were communist it would either have to be dominated by a single imperialism, or there would be an unending series of wars between the "Marxist" rulers of different countries.

We are witnesses and participators in momentous and complicated intellectual and moral processes, the combined effects of which cannot be foreseen. On the one hand, many optimistic assumptions of nineteenth-century humanism have broken down, and in many fields of culture there is a sense of bankruptcy. On the other hand, thanks to the unprecedented speed and diffusion of information, human aspirations throughout the world are increasing faster than the means of satisfying them: this leads to rapidly growing frustration and consequent aggressiveness. Communists have shown great skill in exploiting this state of mind and channelling aggressive feelings in

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

various directions according to circumstances, using fragments of Marxist language to suit their purpose. Messianic hopes are the counterpart of the sense of despair and impotence that overcomes mankind at the sight of its own failures. The optimistic belief that there is a ready-made, immediate answer to all problems and misfortunes, and that only the malevolence of enemies (defined according to choice) stands in the way of its being instantly applied, is a frequent ingredient in ideological systems passing under the name of Marxism—which is to say that Marxism changes content from one situation to another and is cross-bred with other ideological traditions. At present Marxism neither interprets the world nor changes it: it is merely a repertoire of slogans serving to organize various interests, most of them completely remote from those with which Marxism originally identified itself. A century after the collapse of the First International, the prospect of a new International capable of defending the interests of oppressed humanity throughout the world is less likely than it has ever been.

The self-deification of mankind, to which Marxism gave philosophical expression, has ended in the same way as all such attempts, whether individual or collective: it has revealed itself as the farcical aspect of human bondage.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Communism in Israel: 13 Years after the Split

Alain Greilsammer

IN August 1965, the Israeli Communist Party split into two violently antagonistic parties: RAKAH (*Ha-Reshima ha-Kommunistit ha-Hadashah*—the New Communist List) and MAKI (*Ha-Miflaga ha-Kommunistit ha-Israelit*—the Israeli Communist Party, as the party had been called before the split).[1] Before definitively separating after a fierce struggle, the two factions were known as the "Vilner-Tubi-Habibi group"[2] and the "Mikunis-Sneh-Vilenska group,"[3] according to the names of their principal leaders in the political bureau.

The controversy between the two groups, which lasted roughly three to four years (1962–1965), focused on almost all questions of theoretical and practical importance:

[1] The major article dealing with the split within the Israeli Communist Party is: Meir Edelstein, "Likrat Hapilug be-MAKI be-1965" (Hebrew), *Meassef*, No. 5, Mar. 1973, pp. 146–195, a part of which was translated by the author in "The 1965 Split in MAKI and the CPSU," *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, Vol. IV, No. 1 (1974), 23–38. Two other articles, of minor importance, trace the process of the split: Kevin Devlin, "Communism in Israel. Anatomy of a Split," *Survey*, No. 62 (Jan. 1967) pp. 141–151 and Maurice Friedberg, "The Split in Israel's Communist Party," *Midstream*, Vol. XII, No. 2 (Feb. 1966), pp. 19–28.

[2] Meir Vilner: born in 1918 in Vilna, Ber Kovner arrived in Palestine in 1938; as a student in the Hebrew University, he joined the Communist Party of Palestine (PKP), then an underground party; in 1944, he, together with Mikunis and Vilenska, became the collegiate leadership of the PKP. See *Who's Who in Israel* (Bronfman and Cohen, Tel Aviv 1973–74), p. 406. Tewfik Tubi and Emil Habibi: both born in 1922 in Haifa; they are of Christian origin; Tubi was a labour exchange officer during the Mandate, while Habibi was a teacher, radio announcer and journalist; they joined the PKP in the early 1940s; in 1943 they founded the National Liberation League with other former members of the PKP; and in 1948 they rejoined the Israeli Communist Party, immediately becoming members of its Political Bureau. See *Who's Who in Israel*, op. cit. (1973–74), p. 173; *Yediot Aharonot*, 25 Nov. 1966; *Maariv*, 21 Nov. 1966.

[3] Shmuel Mikunis: born in 1903 in Polnoye (Russia); arrived in Palestine in 1921 via Alexandria; a comedian, he was a co-founder of the "Ohel" Workers' Theatre in Tel Aviv in 1925; in 1933 he received a diploma in civil engineering (Paris); in 1937 he joined the PKP and became a member of its Secretariat in 1939; in 1943 he became Secretary General of the Communist Party, a post which he retained as well, without interruption, after the creation of the State of Israel. See *Who's Who in Israel*, op. cit. (1973–74), p. 271.

Moshe Sneh: Moshe Kleinbaum (Sneh) was born in 1909 in Radzyn (Poland); he studied medicine in Warsaw, and became Chairman of the Zionist Organization of Poland; in 1940 he arrived in Palestine and became Commander-in-Chief of the Haganah (underground Jewish army). In 1946–47 he was a member of the Jewish Agency Executive and dealt with illegal immigration. In 1948 he joined the Marxist party Mapam, which he left abruptly in 1953 in order to join MAKI in 1954. He quickly became a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party. See *Who's Who in Israel*, op. cit. (1972), p. 328; and *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Keter, Jerusalem, 1971), Vol. XV, pp. 16–17.

Esther Vilenska: Esther Novak (Vilenska); born in 1918 in Vilna; arrived in Palestine in 1938. In 1943 she became a member of the PKP leadership. From 1948 on, she has continually been a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party, responsible for trade-union issues. See: *Who's Who in Israel*, op. cit. (1972), p. 355.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1. Can the Arab-Israeli conflict be distinguished from the current fundamental conflict which has brought the imperialist and anti-imperialist forces of the world into confrontation with one another? The Mikunis group believed that the answer to this question was yes (the Arab-Israeli conflict being a confrontation between two nationalisms), while the Vilner group disagreed.

2. Is the national liberation movement of the Arab peoples an essentially sound and positive movement? While approving of this movement, the Mikunis group, unlike the Vilner group, felt that it contained certain negative elements, and reserved the right to criticize it.

3. Does the Israeli Communist Party have to place the interests of the USSR and of the international communist movement above everything else? For the Vilner group, the answer to this question was unhesitatingly and unconditionally a positive one, whereas the Mikunis group was clearly more reserved, believing that a communist party must above all be responsible to the working class of its own country.

4. Will there be, in the coming years, a substantial democratic evolution of political life in Israel following the anti-Ben-Gurion wave, which grew out of the revelations of the Lavon Affair? For the Mikunis group, the change, marked principally by Eshkol's entry into office in place of Ben-Gurion (1963), was clear, whereas the Vilner group did not see this as a significant turning point.

5. Finally, had the time come for a new unified front together with the elements of the Zionist extreme left? The Mikunis group felt that the time for such a move had indeed come, while the Vilner group continued to consider the policies of the Zionist parties to be totally incompatible with those of the communist party.

After the split, the two new parties were known in Israel, as well as throughout the world, as the " New Communists " or the " Arab Communist Party " (Vilner-Tubi-Habibi), and the " Jewish Communist Party " (Mikunis-Sneh-Vilenska). For the public at large, this appellation reflected the composition of the two parties as much as their general orientation.

The various sources differ as to the numerical importance of each of the two groups at the time of the split and thereafter. In fact, the number of registered members, actually very small, has always remained a " party secret." Each probably reckoned between 800 and 1,000 members in 1965,[4] and this figure tended to drop in the course of the following years in the case of MAKI, and to rise slightly in the case of RAKAH.

[4] 800, according to Berl Balti, former member of the Political Bureau of MAKI; 1,000 according to Shmuel Mikunis. (Interviews conducted in Tel Aviv in November 1975.) The figure of 1,000 is also given by the *Yearbook on International Communist Affairs* (1966), p. 273 and by *World Strength of the Communist Party Organizations* (1966).

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Recognition of RAKAH by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Between 1965 and 1967, a primary goal of MAKI, as well as of RAKAH, was clearly to be recognized by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the other communist parties under Soviet influence as being, in contradistinction to its rival, the sole "Communist Party of Israel." This search for legitimation by the international movement necessarily involved the six principal leaders in lobbying activities throughout the world.[5] They travelled to all the capitals of Eastern Europe, as well as to Paris and Rome. For a while, particularly towards the end of 1965, it was not at all clear that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union supported one faction rather than the other.[6] Certain commentators thought they saw a preference on the part of Moscow for MAKI,[7] while others believed that the CPSU would soon "choose" RAKAH. On the other hand, the leaders of the international communist movement clearly wanted a rapid Jewish-Arab reunification within Israeli communism. Evidence of this desire can be found, for example, in the summoning of the leaders of both parties to Moscow in November 1965,[8] where they held long talks with Suslov and Ponomarev. Several reports indicate that they were given an "ultimatum" to reunite within six months.[9] Despite this, Vilner was very evasive on the issue upon his return to Tel Aviv,[10] and Mikunis appeared even more pessimistic about an eventual reunification.[11] The fact is that their differences were too great to permit their reunification, and Moscow's aspirations in this regard came to naught.

Logic demanded, for two reasons, that the Soviet leaders declare their preference for RAKAH:

1. In early 1966, the Soviet Union underwent a very clear pro-Arab turn, especially following the *coup d'état* in March which brought the left wing of the Baath party into power in Damascus. In the course of 1966 and the first half of 1967, the USSR adopted increasingly militant anti-Israeli positions[12] (hostility towards Israel being a unifying factor for the "progressive" Arab regimes).

[5] See *Yearbook on International Communist Affairs* (1966), p. 275.

[6] The CPSU sent equally warm wishes to both congresses. See: *Ha-Ve'ida ha-Hameshesre* (The 15th Congress—MAKI) (Tel Aviv, 1965), pp. 182–185; and *Information Bulletin* (Communist Party of Israel—RAKAH), special ed. (Oct. 1965), p. 55.

[7] This thesis was confirmed by Yair Tsaban, former member of the Political Bureau of MAKI, in an interview in Tel Aviv, Nov. 1975.

[8] *Yearbook on International Communist Affairs* (1966), p. 274; Kevin Devlin, loc. cit. p. 148; *Information Bulletin* (Communist Party of Israel—MAKI), No. 1–2 (Jan. 1966), p. 3.

[9] Joseph Kahn, "*Les communistes israëliens à Moscou*," *Est et Ouest*, 1–15 Feb. 1966).

[10] News Commentary on Israeli radio, 29 Nov. 1965.

[11] *Kol Ha'am*, 22 Mar. 1966.

[12] See, for example: Avigdor Dagan, *Moscow and Jerusalem, Twenty Years of Relations between Israel and the Soviet Union* (Abelard-Schuman, London, 1971), pp. 166–167; Oded Eran and Jerome E. Singer, "Soviet Policy towards the Arab World 1955–71," *Survey*, No. 81, Autumn 1971, pp. 22ff.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

2. During the elections to the Knesset in November 1965, MAKI experienced an overwhelming defeat, barely gaining representation, as it won only 13,617 votes, or 1·1 per cent of the ballots cast,[13] while RAKAH captured 27,413 votes, or 2·3 per cent of the ballots cast. Most significantly, it won 42 per cent of the votes in the Arab "cities" of the country (Nazareth and Shafa Amr).[14]

Results of the 1965 Elections (in percentages) for Several Competing Lists in the Arab Sector[15]

	Cities	Urban Localities	Large Villages	Small Villages	Beduins	Total
Alignment (MAPAI and Ahdut Haavoda)	3·4	—	8·3	13·6	23·0	8·5
Pro-governmental reformist Arab lists	35·0	43·1	44·2	43·1	50·0	42·9
MAPAM	6·7	5·1	8·8	14·4	18·2	10·3
RAKAH	42·0	41·4	23·1	13·1	4·5	23·6
MAKI	0·6	1·0	0·4	1·6	0·6	1·1

(The other competing lists were those of the religious parties, RAFI, GAHAL, Haolam Haze, the Independent Liberals, etc.)

According to the delegates sent by MAKI to Moscow, the first signs of Soviet preference for the "New Communists" could be felt in the last months of 1966. The growing divergence between the positions of MAKI and of RAKAH on the Arab-Israeli conflict made the Soviet "choice" inevitable.

During the troubled weeks which preceded the Six-Day War, MAKI called upon the great powers to exert their influence in order to avoid war, and abstained from criticizing the Israeli government; as for RAKAH, it tried to follow the Soviet positions as closely as possible, daily condemning Israel "for the tension it is causing on the frontiers" and "for its intention to overthrow the progressive Syrian regime."[16]

When the war broke out, both parties adopted clear-cut positions. For RAKAH, the war of June 1967 was a war of aggression, well prepared by Israel and the United States with a view to overthrowing the progressive regimes of the Arab world, at the head of which stood

[13] It should be noted as well that, during the same year, MAKI received only 1·58 per cent of the votes in the elections to the Histadrut, and 0·8 per cent of the votes in the teachers' union.

[14] In the municipal elections in Nazareth, conducted at the same time as the elections to the Knesset, RAKAH made considerable progress: It received 4,103 out of 11,096 votes and won seven of the 15 seats on the municipal council. See Jacob M. Landau, *The Arabs in Israel. A Political Study* (Oxford University Press, London, 1969), pp. 171–173.

[15] Source: Yehiel Harari, *Ha-Aravim be'Israel—1973. Uvdot Ve-misparim* (The Arabs in Israel—1973. Facts and Figures), (Givat Haviva: Centre for Arabic Studies, 1974), p. 34.

[16] See: *Yearbook on International Communist Affairs* (1968), pp. 330–331.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the regimes of Egypt and Syria;[17] for MAKI, this was a war of national defence like that waged by Israel in 1948. Mikunis wished the Israeli forces complete success,[18] and Sneh held that, as the entire Israeli people was rising to prevent its physical destruction, the role of the communist party was to stand by its people.[19] The leaders of MAKI asked the great powers to act immediately in order to obtain a ceasefire and to find a peaceful solution based on respect for the rights of both peoples, Israeli and Arab.

At the end of the war, MAKI defined a peace plan based on four points: (1) the recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in the occupied territories; towards this end, the Israeli government should encourage the establishment of democratic representation for the Palestinians in the territories; (2) the signing of definitive peace agreements between Israel and the Arab states, by direct negotiations; (3) the establishment of a plan for common regional development; (4) the signing of an international agreement for the neutralization of the region, arms limitation, and nuclear demilitarization. RAKAH, for its part, called for Israel's immediate and unconditional withdrawal to the 5 June lines, as a precondition to any peaceful solution.

With the ending of hostilities, the dispute over the "legitimacy" of the two communist parties was resolved: the CPSU and all the communist parties under Soviet influence officially recognized RAKAH as "the only progressive communist party" in Israel, and condemned "the Mikunis-Sneh-Vilenska group" for having "lapsed into nationalist positions while supporting the aggressive policy of the bourgeois parties."[20] The invitation addressed to the leaders of MAKI to attend the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the revolution in Moscow was rescinded. The three leaders were no longer received in any communist country, except Rumania.[21] Nevertheless, they confirm having received private assurances of solidarity from several important members of two sizable communist parties, those of Rumania and Italy, and of several smaller ones, including the Australian, Austrian, Canadian, Dutch, Norwegian and Swedish Communist Parties.

Between the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War

The doctrinal evolution of the two parties can be traced in the statements of their newspapers between 1967 and 1973. RAKAH expresses

[17] A concise account of the exact position of RAKAH can be found in Peretz Merhav, *La Gauche Israëlienne* (Ed. Anthropos, Paris, 1973), pp. 105–107.

[18] Israeli radio, 5 June 1967.

[19] *Kol Ha'am*, 6 June 1967.

[20] *Kommunist*, July 1967; on the similar attitude adopted by the French Communist Party, see *L'Humanité*, 30 June 1967 and 1 July 1967.

[21] Mikunis, in particular, seems to have retained excellent relations with N. Ceausescu, and made several trips to Rumania after 1967. See *Kol Ha'am*, 11 July 1968, on the letter from the Hungarian Communist Party to the leaders of MAKI, setting forth its refusal to invite them to the Congress of Budapest.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

its positions in *al-Ittihad* (in Arabic) and in *Zo Haderekh* (in Hebrew). Its other publications, *al-Jadid, al-Ghad, al-Darb* and *Arakhim*, repeat, in one form or another, the positions expressed in its two principal journals. The ideological evolution of MAKI can be traced primarily by reading its major Hebrew newspaper, *Kol Ha'am*, and its newspapers in various European languages, intended for new immigrants: *Naroden Glas, Frei Isroel, Glasul Poporului, Walka*, etc.

A reading of these journals, as well as the statements by representatives of the two parties in the Knesset,[22] reveals, first of all, a similar policy in almost all areas not related to the Arab-Israeli conflict or to the international communist movement. On domestic policy, in particular, we find similar slogans for " the protection of democratic freedoms "; " the protection of the rights of the wage-earners "; the demands for " fundamental economic reforms "; " the preservation of the existing electoral system " (absolute proportional representation which safeguards the small parties); etc. Nevertheless, RAKAH invariably stressed " the struggle against the repression of the Arab minority," whereas, for MAKI, this progressively became a secondary point. MAKI, for its part, placed greater emphasis on the problems of the disadvantaged strata of the Jewish population (the distress in the Katamon and Musrara quarters of Jerusalem, the struggle of the " Black Panthers " in Israel, etc.).

In certain " international " domains, the two parties also continued to follow a similar policy—for example, against American intervention in Vietnam, against the South African and Rhodesian regimes, against the Federal Republic of Germany, in favour of the decolonization of Angola and Mozambique, etc.

HOWEVER, in reading the newspapers of the two communist parties, it becomes clear that these issues were not their main concern. What was essential to them was precisely the two domains in which they were opposed. MAKI became increasingly critical of the Soviet Union and the international communist movement, while RAKAH, undergoing an evolution opposite to that of most of the Western communist parties, espoused positions which followed more and more closely the positions of the CPSU. At its 17th Congress (1972), RAKAH adopted a motion according to which " the proletarian internationalism of a communist party is to be measured by the degree of its loyalty to the international communist movement." With this in mind, we can understand the completely opposite positions taken by the two communist parties during the Czechoslovakian crisis. MAKI had placed great hopes in the " Prague Spring " and in the Dubcek team (particularly since several of its members, Goldstuecker for example, had strongly recommended the renewal of diplomatic relations with Israel and the resumption of contacts between the Czecho-

22 These statements can be found in the official record, *Divrei ha-Knesset*.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

slovakian Communist Party and MAKI). Sneh, Mikunis and Vilenska therefore unreservedly condemned the intervention of the Warsaw Pact forces.[23] On the other hand, the leaders of RAKAH were among the first leaders of communist parties operating under non-communist regimes to approve such intervention. They went so far as to compare the "Dubcek group" to the "Mikunis group," both constituting anti-Soviet groups which had allowed themselves to be led astray by bourgeois nationalism.[24]

It is above all on the subject of the Arab-Israeli conflict that the two parties followed entirely divergent lines. RAKAH, closely following the positions of the Soviet camp, has never wavered from its demand for an immediate withdrawal from the occupied territories nor from its "Arab" interpretation of Resolution 242. Its evolution with regard to the PLO and other Palestinian organizations has followed that of Moscow: until 1969, it showed itself to be relatively suspicious of the Palestinian organizations (considered by Moscow to have tendencies towards leftism and even, in the case of some, to Maoism[25]) and it consistently condemned acts of terrorism. In 1965, on the eve of the split, Vilner and Tubi declared: "We are opposed to and condemn the support which certain people have given to the adventurous objectives of the PLO and the Army for the Liberation of Palestine, for we consider these objectives to be a negation of Israel's right to exist and we believe that, as such, they are prejudicial to the legitimate cause of the Arab people of Palestine."[26] Traces of such moderation can still be found in the texts of the 16th Congress (1969).[27] However, the year 1969 marked a turning point in the Soviet attitude towards the PLO. The USSR seems to have revised its position following the Conference for the Solidarity of the Arab Peoples and, from that time, has increasingly supported the PLO. References in the Soviet press to the "Palestinian partisans," to the "forces of resistance," etc. have become more frequent.[28] As Professor Moshe Maoz has noted:

> The Soviet Union instructed the Arab communist parties in 1970 to improve relations with the Palestinian guerilla organizations and to seek to bring them under Russian influence. Accordingly, these parties declared their full support for the Palestinian

[23] *Kol Ha'am*, 22 Aug. 1968.

[24] See *Theses for the 16th Congress of RAKAH* (30 Jan. 1969), para. III, p. 37.

[25] See, for example, G. Mirsky, "Rebirth of the Arab World," *New Times*, No. 25 (26 June 1968). Until 1969, there were also frequent criticisms of the Palestinian organizations in the organs of the press of the Arab communist parties, particularly by the Jordanian Communist Party. See Jaan Pennar, *The USSR and the Arabs* (Crane Russak and Co., New York, 1973), p. 42.

[26] *Kol Ha'am*, 19 May 1965; see also Meir Vilner, "*La situation en Israel*," *Nouvelle Revue Internationale*, No. 4 (Apr. 1967), pp. 116–26.

[27] See "*Le XVI^e congres du parti communiste israélien*," *Nouvelle Revue Internationale* (5 May 1969), pp. 132–43.

[28] Oded Eran and Jerome E. Singer loc. cit. p. 27, note 58; Moshe Maoz, *Soviet and Chinese Relations with the Palestinian Guerilla Organizations* (The Hebrew University, Leonard David Institute for International Relations, Jerusalem, 1974), p. 17ff; Jaan Pennar, op. cit. p. 42.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> "liberation movement." Indeed some of them went so far as expressing a line regarding the Palestinian question more extreme than that of the Soviet Union.[29]

RAKAH underwent a similar evolution, though slightly later and in a more discreet manner, in view of its delicate situation. It demanded that Israel agree to negotiate with the PLO but, on the other hand, it continued to condemn certain acts of terrorism ("against the civilian population," such as, for example, the Lod attack) and the hijacking of planes. In November 1970, Tewfik Tubi wrote on the theses of the PLO:

> Such a position endangered the unity of the anti-imperialist forces in the Arab World and harmed the cause of the Arab people of Palestine; to this was added the airline hijackings by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which evoked general criticism in the world. . . .[30]

RAKAH's position on the Palestinians resulted in the party's total isolation from the Jewish Israeli public, while it seems to have considerably augmented its appeal among the Arabs of the country.

Unlike RAKAH, MAKI made increasingly sharp attacks against the "capitulation" of the Soviet Union to "Arab extremism." MAKI tended more and more to present UN Resolution 242 as a kind of "package deal": the withdrawal of Israeli forces would have to be simultaneous with the Arab states' recognition of the State of Israel. MAKI did, of course, condemn the *faits accomplis* in the territories, the establishment of new Jewish settlements, and it condemned the supporters of such *faits accomplis* within the government (Dayan, Galili, etc.) and among the people (the Land of Israel Movement, religious circles). It also called upon Israel to take the initiative with regard to the Palestinians, to help in setting up a form of democratic representation in the territories. Nevertheless, contrary to RAKAH, MAKI totally and with increasing intensity condemned the PLO and its policies. According to MAKI:

> It is the right of Israel to take defensive measures against the terrorists whose aim is to establish their democratic, secular, united Palestine on the ruins of Israel.[31]

Finally, the essential point in the propaganda of each of the two communist parties undoubtedly remained the unrelenting struggle against the rival party. For RAKAH, Mikunis, Sneh and Vilenska were no more than "a bunch of renegades who have degenerated completely in the direction of Jewish nationalism"; for MAKI, Vilner, Tubi and Habibi constituted "a pernicious alliance between Jewish nihilism and the worst Arab chauvinism."

[29] Moshe Maoz, op. cit. p. 42.
[30] Tewfik Tubi, "The Middle East. Dangers and Prospects," *World Marxist Review*, Vol. XIII, No. 11 (Nov. 1970), pp. 35–36.
[31] *Kol Ha'am*, 16 July 1970; see also *Information Bulletin* (Communist Party of Israel —MAKI), No. 9 (Sept. 1970), p. 10.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Evolution of the Two Communist Parties

There has always been a definite relationship, in the case of the two Israeli communist parties, between three distinct elements: the policies adopted by the leadership; the evolution of the membership and of the electorate; the power relationships within the leadership. In other words: RAKAH's identification with the policies of the Arab states and its recognition of the PLO have won it an increasingly large audience among the Israeli Arabs and, at the same time, have provoked the dissipation of its Jewish electorate and the limitation of its Jewish membership to a small number of officials in its administrative bodies. Inevitably, the purely Arab basis of the party increased the political weight of the Arab leaders within the Political Bureau and the Central Committee. The new Arab leaders were distinctly more radical and extremist than those who had occupied these positions earlier. Similarly, MAKI's adoption of a strong Israeli patriotic line earned it a purely Jewish electoral base (its membership was already purely Jewish in 1965) and little by little, those who held a more radically patriotic and "national-Israeli" line saw their position strengthened at the expense of the "moderate" leaders (i.e. those members of the Political Bureau who wanted to maintain a certain moderation in their criticism of the USSR and in their approbation of Israeli policy).

In the case of RAKAH, it was difficult for the outside observer to detect this evolution for the following reason: since 1965, in answer to the accusations of its being a purely "Arab party," RAKAH has made it a rule to maintain a nearly balanced ratio of Jews to Arabs in its central institutions. In this way, it has been able to profess to be the only "internationalist" communist party in Israel. To this end, it has maintained a constant ratio of 13 Jews to 12 Arabs in its Central Committee, and a ratio of five Jews to four Arabs in its Political Bureau. As for its representation in the Knesset, it consisted of three delegates both in 1965 and in 1969 (one Jew, Vilner, and two Arabs, Tubi and Habibi).[32]

This ratio has increasingly become a fiction, given the evolution of its electoral base and its membership. About the latter we know only that RAKAH has not enlarged its small circle of Jewish militants, almost all advanced in years and of East European origin, with the exception of a small group of former Iraqi immigrants.[33] On the other hand, its spectacular electoral growth among the Arabs is clearly revealed in the results of the 1969 elections:

[32] On the composition of the parliamentary faction of the Israeli communist parties, see Martin W. Slann, "Ideology and Ethnicity in Israel's Two Communist Parties: the Conflict between MAKI and RAKAH," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, VII (4) (Winter 1974), p. 374, table 2.

[33] The leaders of RAKAH have always refused on principle to reveal data on the composition of their party.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Results of the 1969 Elections (in percentages) for Several Competing Lists in the Arab Sector [34]

	Cities	Urban Localities	Large Villages	Small Villages	Beduins	Total
Alignment (Labour Party and MAPAM)	5·6	5·1	12·0	21·5	24·5	13·3
Pro-governmental Arab reformist lists	38·9	33·2	37·9	48·0	51·5	40·8
MAKI	0·8	1·1	0·6	—	1·4	0·8
RAKAH	46·0	50·5	31·6	13·1	5·0	29·6

As has already been noted, we have recently witnessed the emergence, within the leadership bodies of RAKAH, of Arabs who support a particularly radical and activist line. The principal figure among them is undoubtedly Tewfik Ziyad, familiar to the Israeli public since his election to the Knesset in 1973.[35] Ziyad soon surpassed all the former Arab leaders of the party in popularity.

Unlike RAKAH, MAKI openly exposed its internal divisions after the Six-Day War. The struggle brought Moshe Sneh (editor of *Kol Ha'am* and president of the Central Committee) into opposition with Shmuel Mikunis (secretary general) and with Esther Vilenska (representative of MAKI in the Histadrut). Alongside Sneh stood the young members of the Political Bureau and the Central Committee (such as Yair Tsaban, Raoul Teitelbaum) and several veterans of the party, former members of the Communist Party of Palestine (Berl Balti, Eliahu Druckmann), as well as some of Sneh's comrades who had left MAPAM together with him in 1953 to join the communist party shortly afterwards. Around Mikunis and Vilenska were grouped a number of veterans (Eliezer Feiler, Abraham Haas, Abraham Lanzmann, etc.).[36] It was Sneh who took the offensive by demanding that MAKI adopt a clearly more patriotic and "Israeli"[37] line. He presented his position in detail in the theses which he set down prior to

[34] Source: Yehiel Harari, op. cit. p. 36.

[35] Tewfik Ziyad: born in 1930 in Nazareth, to a Muslim family; married to a Christian, has three children; member of the PKP since high school, and former member of the National Liberation League; he was second on the communist party list in Nazareth in 1954; he was in Prague in 1972–73; a former construction worker, he is a successful poet in the Arab countries. See *Haolam Haze*, 1 Apr. 1976, pp. 19–21; and Olivier Carre, *L'idéologie palestinienne de résistance* (Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris, 1972), pp. 36–37.

[36] This ideological struggle has been reconstituted here on the basis of the party press on the one hand, and on a number of interviews on the other. The four principal interviews were with Mikunis, Tsaban, Balti and Teitelbaum. The last three were the most loyal of Sneh's colleagues.

[37] See Ilan Greilsammer, "*Tsiunei derekh le-shivato shel Moshe Sneh la-tsionut*" (Landmarks in the Return of Moshe Sneh to Zionism), *Medina U-Memshal* (Jerusalem), No. 10 (Spring 1977), pp. 56–71; and David J. Schnall, "Notes on the Political Thought of Dr. Moshe Sneh," *The Middle East Journal*, XXVII (3), Summer 1973, pp. 342–52.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the 16th Congress of his party [38] (1968) and developed them during the course of the subsequent years. Mikunis and Vilenska fiercely opposed these "revisionist" positions. The principal points of opposition between them were as follows: (1) Sneh believed that the future Israel-Arab borders should be determined only through direct negotiations; in the meantime, Israel should not be required to declare its readiness to return "all the territories without exception," as it was up to the Arabs to make the first step. (2) MAKI should try to enter into an alliance with the Zionist extreme left (Sneh was thinking primarily of an alliance with MAPAM [39]). (3) Mikunis accused Sneh of wanting to strip MAKI of the traditional "structure" of a communist party. (4) Sneh called for a more radical condemnation of the USSR and the popular democracies. (5) Sneh wanted MAKI to place greater emphasis on the urgency of a "revalorization of the Jewish heritage." (6) Finally, Sneh, unlike Mikunis, believed in the necessity of re-evaluating the Zionist phenomenon: in particular, he believed in the possibility of a revolutionary Zionism.

According to Esther Vilenska, "Sneh, who had fully collaborated in the definition of the principles of the 15th Congress (1965), later evolved in the direction of Jewish nationalism." [40] And, in Mikunis' words, "Sneh took a mystical turn. . . ." [41]

Sneh's victory, which dates, in fact, from the 16th Congress of MAKI, was clinched between 1970 and 1972. Moshe Sneh prepared the theses for the 17th Congress in April 1972,[42] but he did not live to see the consummation of his victory, for he died in March 1972. After the 17th Congress, the "Sneh group" (Tsaban-Balti-Teitelbaum) assumed control of MAKI.[43] Mikunis temporarily remained as secretary general and as a delegate to the Knesset, but Vilenska left MAKI in the summer of 1973 in order to found a new party: AKI (*Ha-Oppozitsia ha-Kommunistit ha-Israelit*—the Israeli Communist Opposition), ideologically situated midway between MAKI and RAKAH.[44]

[38] Moshe Sneh, *Problèmes du peuple juif et leurs solutions* (Ed. de l'Avenir, Genève, 1970).

[39] Mikunis and Vilenska believed that MAKI should ally itself first with the anti-annexationists such as Haolam Haze (Uri Avneri), Siah (the New Left of Israel), Brit Hasmol (Yaacov Riftin), etc.

[40] Esther Vilenska, *Ma Karah be-MAKI?* (What Happened in MAKI?) (Orli, Tel Aviv, 1973), p. 4.

[41] Interview with Mikunis, Feb. 1975.

[42] The full account of Sneh's theses and the amendments rejected by the Mikunis-Vilenska group can be found in *Israel at Peace*, No. 4 (Apr. 1972), pp. 2–12.

[43] According to M. Sneh's "political will," published on his death, Tsaban and Balti were his "heirs" and were to carry out his political projects.

[44] The founders of AKI developed their theses in: Esther Vilenska (ed.), *Ma Karah be-MAKI?*, op. cit. This communist group seems to have had no influence on the Israeli public, especially since its principal founder, E. Vilenska, died during the winter of 1975. The creation of AKI brought the number of communist parties in Israel to three. It should be recalled that there exists as well a small, totally uninfluential Trotskyite group, the Israeli Socialist Organization (Matzpen) and that "Chinese" ideas have not penetrated into Israel. On this last subject, see D.U. Loewe, "The Confrontation with Chinese Ideology," *New Outlook*, XVI (1) Jan. 1973, pp. 14–21.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Yom Kippur War and the 1973 Elections

Upon the outbreak of the October war, MAKI and RAKAH adopted positions that were similar to, though clearly sharper than those which they had adopted in 1967. As in 1967, MAKI felt that, for Israel, this was a war of national defence to prevent the physical destruction of its population:

> The political bureau severely condemns the acts of aggression on the part of the Egyptian and Syrian governments against the State of Israel. Together with the entire people, we are convinced that the Israeli army will succeed in repelling the enemy and in defending the security and the peace of the nation.[45]

MAKI's reaction was thus even more explicit than in 1967, and entirely parallel to that adopted by the Zionist parties. This seems to have strengthened the desire of the Tsaban-Balti leadership group to integrate itself within the Zionist extreme left.

RAKAH, for its part, condemned the Israeli government with unequalled vehemence for not having made the necessary efforts to prevent the war. Throughout the months of October, November and December, it condemned the "atrocities" committed by the Israeli army and endeavoured to expose "the Israel-American complicity in the conduct of the war."[46]

The elections to the eighth Knesset took place on 31 December. In conformance with contacts established prior to the hostilities, MAKI formed a joint list with the Zionist extreme left group "Blue-Red."[47] The list, called MOKED (Focus), was headed by the leader of "Blue-Red," Colonel (Res.) Meir Pail. Second on the list was Mikunis, the most well-known man in MAKI, third was Ran Cohen (Blue-Red) and fourth, Yair Tsaban. The MOKED list had only very limited success, polling merely 1·1 per cent of the vote, barely avoiding total elimination. Only Meir Pail was elected to the Knesset. This was the first time that the faction composed of the former communists of MAKI did not have a single member elected. Despite these poor results, the leaders of MOKED noted with satisfaction that they had polled their best scores within the "politically active" sectors of the population: the youth, particularly the students, the intellectuals, the mobilized soldiers, the kibbutz members (especially the young members of the Hashomer Hatzair kibbutzim linked to MAPAM), etc. Nevertheless, the low overall percentage served as an incentive to the leaders of Blue-Red as well as of MAKI to seek a complete merger of their organizations. Contacts were established with a view to such a synthesis, despite the rearguard opposition of Secretary General Mikunis, now isolated. Mikunis had no choice but to resign from his

[45] *Israel at Peace*, No. 9–10, Nov. 1973, p. 2.

[46] See, for example, *Zo Haderekh*, 15 Oct. 1973.

[47] A group composed essentially of intellectuals and students as well as several members of Hashomer Hatzair kibbutzim.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

post in November 1974 and, in May 1975, announced that he was leaving MAKI, accusing it of having become "completely Zionist." In July 1975, the final merger of the two parties into the new MOKED party took place. Meir Pail was its only representative in the Knesset and its principal leader, while Yair Tsaban was second to him and the leader of MOKED in the Histadrut. MOKED defines itself as a Zionist-revolutionary party.[48]

In the December 1973 elections, RAKAH experienced a very noticeable growth. It received 3·4 per cent of the votes cast (as opposed to 2·8 per cent in 1969) and won four seats in the Knesset instead of the three which it had previously held. Besides Meir Vilner and a secondary Jewish figure, Abraham Levenbraun, its other two delegates were Tubi, who remains the leader of the party in the Arab sector, and, most importantly, Tewfik Ziyad, who has made a very marked entry onto the national political scene.[49] It was, in fact, within the Arab population that RAKAH gained ground in 1973, carrying 37 per cent of the Arab vote (as opposed to 29·6 per cent in 1969). Its principal rivals, the Alignment and the pro-governmental lists affiliated with it, received only 36 per cent of the Arab vote (as opposed to 54·1 per cent in 1969). RAKAH's success was particularly striking in the Arab "cities" of the country.

Results of the 1973 Elections (in percentages) for Several Competing Lists in the Arab Sector [50]

	Cities	Urban Localities	Large Villages	Small Villages	Beduins	Total
Alignment (Labour Party and MAPAM)	6·6	12·0	8·3	16·7	10·3	10·0
Pro-governmental Arab reformist lists	27·1	27·6	32·1	46·3	69·4	36·0
RAKAH	55·1	41·9	40·9	18·7	6·5	37·0
MAKI	0·3	0·3	0·4	1·4	0·9	0·5

On the Way to the 1977 Elections

Certain commentators of the Israeli political scene sought to view the success of RAKAH in 1973 as an accident, closely tied to the Yom Kippur War and to the sudden "leap" in the national pride of the

[48] With the merger between MAKI and Blue-Red, *Kol Ha'am* ceased to appear after close to 40 years in existence. The journal of MOKED, founded in 1975, is called *Emdah* (Position).

[49] Shortly after its election, Tewfik Ziyad was severely criticized for having published a nationalist poem in *Zo Haderekh* in honour of the Egyptians' crossing of the Suez Canal. There were even some who demanded that his parliamentary immunity be lifted.

[50] Source: Yehiel Harari, op cit. p. 37.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Israeli Arabs following the Egyptian crossing of the Suez Canal and the initial Arab military successes. This thesis was shown to be incorrect two years later in the results of the municipal elections in Nazareth (December 1975).

This municipal election was the first to be held in Nazareth, the principal Arab city in Israel, since 1970. It was also the first to be conducted according to the newly adopted electoral procedure which calls for the direct election of mayors in the cities of Israel, as distinct from elections to the municipal councils. RAKAH's candidate, Tewfik Ziyad, received 67·3 per cent of the vote, and his list, the "Democratic Front" (composed of members of the communist party and of nationalist intellectuals) won 11 of the 15 municipal seats up for election. The other candidates for mayor and the other four lists (two affiliated with the Alignment and two with the National Religious Party) suffered a resounding defeat.[51]

These electoral results are even more significant if we consider the fact that the communist party has traditionally been weaker in municipal elections than in the national elections: it receved only 40 per cent. of the vote in the municipal elections in Nazareth. This success of the communist party in 1975 was undoubtedly the result of several phenomena: a growing nationalist sentiment, to be sure; but also the dissatisfaction of the Nazareth population with the very poor administration of the city by those formerly in power, all affiliated with the Alignment and all to some extent linked to the al-Zubi family. We should note as well the growing dissatisfaction of the young Arab intellectuals with the lack of high level posts offered to them by Israeli society.[52]

Following this "victory"—the election of the first "red" mayor in the most important Arab city in the country—the communist party sought to profit from the impetus it had acquired, and to extend the scope of its audience beyond its bastions of power and its traditional electoral base for the general elections of 1977; that is to say, it sought to extend the scope of its audience to include the Muslims and the Druze[53] (the communist party has long been rooted in the Christian community),[54] and the small villages of the Galilee and the Triangle (the impact of the party has always decreased as a function of the size of the Arab localities: in the villages, the system of family clans—the

51 See: *Maariv*, 10 December 1975; *Jerusalem Post*, 11 Dec. 1975.

52 This phenomenon is stressed by Jacob M. Landau, op. cit. p. 43.

53 On the beginnings of communist penetration into the Druze areas see: Yehuda Oliva, "*Hameoravut Hapolitit shel ha-Druzim be-Israel*" (The Political Involvement of the Druze in Israel), *Medina U-Memshal* (Jerusalem), Vol. 2, No. 1, Winter 1972, pp. 98–109.

54 As in Nazareth, the communist vote remains preponderantly concentrated in the Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic quarters. The Christians of Israel are the most politically involved, and in a radical manner. The communist cadres retain a Christian majority. See Ilan Greilsammer, "Splits in Israel's Communist Party," Report to the 2nd Congress of the Israeli Political Science Association, Oct. 1976.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hamulas—interferes with the activity of the parties and favours the Zionist parties).[55]

This desire on the part of the communist party to expand to the rural areas was undoubtedly at the root of the organization of "Land Day" on 30 March 1976. It will be recalled that during these "spontaneous" demonstrations, organized in fact by RAKAH in order to protest the expropriation of land in the Galilee, violent clashes in several Arab villages brought young men throwing stones and burning tyres into conflict with Israeli policemen and soldiers, resulting in several fatalities. RAKAH, on this occasion, declared itself the "spearhead" of Arab claims.[56]

"Land Day" frightened the Jewish public, but it undoubtedly enabled the communist party to increase the number of its supporters in the Arab villages. Municipal elections were held in seven Arab villages in 1976. The results were as follows:

	Composition of the Council	
	Before the 1976 Elections	*After the 1976 Elections*
Kfar Kana	Council appointed by the Ministry of the Interior	Familial List
Sakhnin	Affiliated with the Alignment (governmental)	No change
Beit Djan	Affiliated with the Alignment (governmental)	No change
Nahaf	Affiliated with the Alignment (governmental)	RAKAH Front and local elites
Deir al-Asad	Council appointed by the Ministry of the Interior	RAKAH FRONT and local elites
Makr	Affiliated with the Alignment (governmental)	RAKAH Front and local elites
Kfar Kara	Affiliated with the Alignment (governmental)	No change

At its 18th Congress, held in December 1976[57] in Haifa, the communist party could note with satisfaction that its strategy of penetrating into the Arab countryside in the Galilee and into the Triangle had borne fruit. It decided to continue this strategy in preparing for the elections to the Knesset set for 1977.

It is in this light that we should interpret the increasingly vehement declarations of the leaders of RAKAH during the early months of

[55] On the interference of the system of family clans in Israeli political parties, see Jacob M. Landau, op. cit. *passim* and Abner Cohen, *Arab Border Villages in Israel* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1965), *passim*.

[56] See *Haolam Haze*, 1 Apr. 1976, pp. 19–21; *Maariv*, *Yediot Aharonot*, *Haaretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 31 Mar. 1976.

[57] See: *Jerusalem Post*, 2 Dec. 1976; 15 Dec. 1976. This congress brought together 480 delegates, representing (according to official sources of the party) 79 branches.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1977. Similarly, it hoped to win additional votes because of its meetings with the leaders of the PLO, notably in Prague, in May 1977.[58]

As the elections of 17 May drew near, RAKAH nevertheless amended its tactics in the hope of winning, as far as this was possible, a certain number of votes from among the Jewish population. In light of the vehemence of its attacks against the State and Zionism, the obvious similarity of its views and those of the PLO, and the fear which had been implanted by the events of 30 March and the declarations of Tewfik Ziyad, its quest for Jewish partners could only be directed towards the most marginal and dissident groups. Whence RAKAH's call to the "Black Panthers," a movement of militant character, made up of Sephardic youths from the most disadvantaged social strata. A small group of the "Black Panthers" led by Charlie Biton, Kokhavi Shemesh,[59] and Menahem Cohen took up this call and decided to form a joint list with the communists for the elections to the Knesset. This list was named the "Democratic Front for Peace and Equality" (HADASH).

Thus, for the first time in its history, the communist party promised a "sure" place on its list to a non-communist: Charlie Biton received the third position on the HADASH list.

Another splinter of the "Black Panthers," refusing to enter into any coalition with the pro-Soviet communists, decided to join MOKED and other leftist personalities to form the SHELLI list (which would win two seats in the new Knesset.)[60]

TO what extent did the attempt by the RAKAH communist party to win the Arab vote and that of the marginal Jewish groups succeed at the polls on 17 May 1977?

In this dramatic election, which saw the victory of the Likud and the fall of the Alignment, the communist party realized its goals only in part: in receiving 78,732 votes, it won only one seat more than it had received in 1973. Today, there are five representatives of the HADASH list sitting in the ninth Knesset, as opposed to the four representatives of RAKAH who sat in the eighth Knesset. The communist party itself has only four representatives (Meir Vilner, Tewfik Tubi, Tewfik Ziyad, and Hanna Moiss) since Charlie Biton is not a communist.

It is not necessary to undertake here a more detailed analysis of the elections. However, it should be noted that the Arab vote for the

58 See: *Jerusalem Post*, 5 May 1977; 8 May 1977; 10 May 1977. The RAKAH delegation was composed of two Jews—Uzi Burstein and Wolf Ehrlich—and two Arabs—Emil Tuma and Al-Ashur. The communist party had already had informal contacts with the PLO in Moscow, in February 1976, and in New York, in October 1976.

59 In the course of a press conference, K. Shemesh declared, on the occasion of the formation of the joint list, that he had long been sympathetic to the communist party. After the elections of 1973, he had asked to join RAKAH, but the latter had preferred that Shemesh and his group continue their activities in the Jewish slums.

60 Arieh (Lyova) Eliav, and Col. (Res.) Meir Pail.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

communist party was quite heavy, but unequal. RAKAH-HADASH received roughly 50 per cent of the total Arab vote, which represented a " jump " of 13 per cent in comparison with 1973. In certain large towns or villages, it won an impressive percentage of the vote: 89 per cent in Arraba, 80 per cent in Tamra, 76 per cent in Shafa Amr, 76 per cent in Sakhnin, 70 per cent in Kfar Kana, 69 per cent in Touran, etc. However, although the Christian vote remained strongly in favour of the communist party, and although the communists gained strength among the Beduins, the RAKAH vote remained moderate in the small Moslem villages and among the Druze. The communist party's appeal to the Jews, even the marginal groups among them, seems to have had no results.

After the Victory of the Likud

Following the startling results of the Knesset elections, the question arose as to the effect these results would have on those within the Arab population who had supported RAKAH.

Certain observers believed paradoxically that the victory of Menahem Begin's party and the defeat of the left would draw the Israeli Arabs away from RAKAH: faced with the rise of the Likud, the Arab population would understand that it was in its best interests not to adopt overly radical positions but rather to align itself in the future with the Jewish left (Labour, Mapam, Shelli) in order effectively to block government policy. The elections to the Histadrut, held a month after the Knesset elections, seemed to corroborate this prediction, with RAKAH making only a modest showing (2·86 per cent, or only 0·4 per cent more than in the previous Histadrut elections). It is therefore reasonable to assume that a portion of the Arab workers who had voted for HADASH (RAKAH) in May 1977 voted for the Alignment (Labour-Mapam) in June.[61]

However, over the course of the subsequent months, the prediction that the Likud victory would draw the Arabs away from RAKAH gradually proved false. On the contrary, the victory gave a considerable boost to the propaganda of the communist party and of the other extremist groups (such as *Bnaia al-Balad*, the " Sons of the Village "), which could now support their claims that nothing could be expected from an Israeli government, that the Jewish population was moving more and more to the right, that the Israeli Arabs would be increasingly oppressed, and so on.

[61] Results of the elections to the Histadrut (21 June 1977):

	1977	*Last Elections*
Labor-Mapam Alignment (Maarakh)	55·44	58·3
Likud (Herut-Liberals-Laam)	28·22	22·7
Democratic Movement for Change	8·04	—
HADASH (RAKAH- Black Panthers)	2·86	2·4
Independent Liberal Party and Citizens Rights Movement	1·28	5·96
Religious Workers	1·08	4·3
Shelli	1·01	2·5

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A study conducted by Eli Reches, Director of the prestigious Shiloah Institute of Tel Aviv University, which was published in February 1978, clearly indicates that the tendency towards radicalization has continued to develop within the non-Jewish minority in Israel.[62] According to Reches, the Israeli Arab elites are becoming increasingly nationalistic, no longer identifying themselves with the State. The author attributes a central role to the 1977 election results in the development of this process, for which he enumerates a number of other causes as well: the international recognition of the PLO, unrealized aspirations for raising the social status of the Arab population, the constant agitation conducted by RAKAH, etc. Among the new manifestations of this radicalization, Reches notes in particular the appearance of new nationalist organizations on the statewide level: the National Committee of Arab Students, the National Committee of Arab Mayors, and the National Committee for the Protection of the Land (these organizations are in fact inspired by the Israeli communist party).

If the Likud victory clearly helped promote the propaganda of RAKAH among the non-Jewish minorities, it also placed the "physical" existence of their party in jeopardy. Since that time, the number of Knesset members in favour of outlawing the communist party has noticeably grown, when compared to the period of Labour hegemony. Several such demands have already been formulated, the MK Samuel Flatto-Sharon has made it one of his principal causes, particularly in light of the wave of emotion surrounding the attack on the coastal road in March 1978. He put forward a draft bill calling for the outlawing of the communist party, and thousands of passers-by in Tel Aviv signed a petition in support of it. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that a majority of the Knesset members will vote in favour of such a bill.[63]

Until the initiative of President Sadat, or between May and November 1977, the communist party maintained a "low profile." It undoubtedly wanted to wait quietly while observing the first steps taken by the new regime in domestic as well as foreign policy. On the domestic level, these months were marked by social conflict and by economic and budgetary debates. (In October, Minister of Finance Simcha Ehrlich launched a "New Economic Policy" inspired by the views of Milton Friedman and characterized by a strong liberal tendency. Together with the parties of the Zionist left, the communist party protested against this "new capitalist orientation" and "the advantages accorded to private interests.") Moreover, the veterans of the communist party seem to have had some trouble "tempering"

[62] See Eli Reches, *The Israeli Arabs and the Expropriation of Lands in Galilee*, Shiloah Institute, Tel Aviv, 1978. (Hebrew).

[63] More than 40 MKs signed a manifesto against outlawing RAKAH. Among the signatories, we find such names as Abba Eban, Yigal Allon, Yeruham Meshel, Gideon Hausner, Yehoshua Rabinowitz, etc. See the text of the manifesto in *Jerusalem Post*, 29 Mar. 1978.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

their hot-headed partner from the Black Panthers, Charlie Biton, who became known in the Knesset for his unconventional style. Biton denounced the "leaking" of the matriculation exams which, he said, favoured the more wealthy students; he recorded one of his conversations in the Knesset with a pro-governmental MK and then suddenly published this recording; he brought prisoners' wives to one of the sessions of a Knesset committee to protest loudly against the situation in the prisons, etc.

The three Arab members of the communist faction in the Knesset (Tubi, Ziyad, and Moiss) denounced "the constant repression of the Arab minority," particularly after the "Madj-al Kurum affair": the police entered in force into this Arab village in order to demolish illegally erected buildings, leading to a skirmish in which one person was killed and twelve wounded . The communist party voiced accusations against the Ministry of the Interior, and particularly against its representative in the Galilee, Israel Koenig, who emerged as the communists' primary object of attack.[64]

In foreign policy, the communist party closely followed the positions of the Soviet Union on the Israel-Arab conflict: it continued to call for the convening of the Geneva Conference, asserting that "it is impossible to resolve the Mideast crisis without the participation of the Soviet Union," and it demanded that Israel accept the PLO as a full partner, as "the sole legal representative of the Palestinian people."[65] Like the other communist parties throughout the world, RAKAH expressed satisfaction at the joint US-USSR communiqué, which seemed to promise the convening of the Geneva Conference in December 1977. Shortly afterwards, the communist party violently opposed the "Israeli-American working paper," signed by President Carter and Moshe Dayan, which it described as a "complete alignment between American and Israeli policy," and as a denial by the Americans of the joint communiqué just signed with the USSR. (RAKAH, of course, saw these developments as the result of the heavy pressure exerted by the Zionist lobby on the government in Washington.)

CONTRARY to later claims by the communist party leaders, President Sadat's initiative took them as much by surprise as it did Israeli political circles, the great powers, and the Arab states. Before Moscow had officially adopted its position, Meir Vilner, Secretary General of the party, declared that he expected Sadat, at the Knesset,

[64] Following the Madj-al Kurum affair, the communist party submitted two motions to the Knesset. The first, by Hanna Moiss, called for a discussion in plenary session of the "Problems of the Local Arab Authorities." The second, by Tewfik Tubi, called for a committee discussion of the scuffle with the police. Both were immediately rejected. For several days, the communist party demanded the setting up of a parliamentary committee of inquiry.

[65] The communist party was the only party to vote against the government on 1 Sept. 1977, when Begin asked the Knesset to take a public stand against any contact with the PLO (two parties of the Zionist left abstained: Shelli and Mapam).

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"to say more or less what we are saying." Vilner even added that "If Sadat presents peace proposals at the Knesset, I shall move that the Knesset accept them." [66]

But several hours later, RAKAH had to readjust its positions and suddenly saw the initiative of Anwar Sadat as a totally negative act. After the Jerusalem visit, Zahi Karkabi, Secretary of the Central Committee, wrote that "Sadat's initiatives have postponed peace and placed obstacles in its path, for they hampered the meeting of the Geneva Conference." [67] In a leading article on the policy of the Egyptian president, this prominent RAKAH personality described Sadat's initiatives as a series of machiavellian acts which began with the repression of the Egyptian masses in January 1977 and the arrest of members of the leftist opposition in Egypt, and continuing through his *rapprochement* with the United States, the suggestion of a meeting of Mideast foreign ministers in Washington (without the PLO), etc. Karkabi added that this behaviour could be explained by the fact that "Sadat is not the representative of the working class but the representative of the financiers and the large landowners." [68] Benefiting from a short exchange with Sadat in the Knesset, Meir Vilner strongly criticized him for not having included any reference to the PLO in his speech, and he added: "It seems to us that if Israel does not recognize the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, and does not recognize the rights of the Palestinian people, there will be no solution, there will be no peace."

With the new initiatives taken by Sadat upon his return to Egypt (and with the growing opposition of the Soviets to the Egyptian head of state), RAKAH hardened its position. On 28 November 1977, its political bureau published the following communiqué:

> The Cairo Conference, planned on the initiative of Sadat in concert with the Begin government and with the approval of the Americans, will not bring the Geneva Conference nearer but, to the contrary, put it off; it will not bring about a comprehensive solution to the Israel-Arab conflict but, to the contrary, hinder such a solution by separate partial agreements. Here, among others, are the goals of this meeting in Cairo: to divide the Arab states, and to find collaborators in the occupied territories who will be no more than representatives of themselves. . . .

In the course of a Knesset debate on the government's decision to go to the Cairo Conference, Tewfik Tubi declared: "The present developments are not good for peace. They are good only for strengthening the US foothold in our region, strengthening the Begin regime, and saving the Sadat regime from collapse." [69]

This same tone has continued to characterize RAKAH's subsequent attacks on Israel and Egypt. It strongly criticized the "Begin Plan"

[66] *Jerusalem Post*, 18 Nov. 1977.
[67] Zahi Karkabi, "The Mid East Crisis and the Initiatives of President Sadat" (Hebrew), *Arakhim* (Tel Aviv), No. 1, 1978, p. 3.
[68] id., ibid., pp. 3–11.
[69] *Jerusalem Post*, 29 Nov. 1977.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of self-rule for the West Bank,[70] it declared the "Ismailia Summit" a total failure; it blamed the collapse of the Political Commission in Jerusalem on Israeli intransigence (and proposed a motion of censure in the Knesset); it saw the Israeli raid into Lebanon as a "criminal act which deserved to be punished"; it condemned the Camp David agreements.

In conclusion, throughout the spring of 1978, the Israeli communist party increasingly identified itself with the policy of the "Rejectionist Front," especially with the positions of Syria and the PLO. To quote the Secretary of the Central Committee:

> The countries which conduct an anti-imperialist foreign policy and a domestic policy beneficial to the popular masses are opposed to the Sadat initiative, while the countries which conduct a pro-imperialist foreign policy and a domestic policy beneficial to the financiers and landowners approve this initiative, either publicly or tacitly.

Conclusions

Whether or not the preference which the Israeli Arabs show for RAKAH will continue to grow depends on many factors, among them some hypothetical events which might intervene:

> The conclusion of an overall peace agreement between Israel and Eygpt;
> The decline of the PLO;
> A very strong effort on the part of the Israeli government to improve public services in the Arab villages (various infrastructures, roads, electricity, water, etc.), and especially to provide suitable employment for the youth and the intellectuals;
> New developments in the Lebanese crisis which would place the Moslems and Christians of Israel in a position of open conflict;
> Finally, the communist party might actually be outlawed. However, the Israeli government and parliament seem presently inclined to allow the communist party to continue to function as a "safety valve" while keeping a close watch on it.

None of these has occurred so far. In the last municipal elections in Israel which took place on November 7, 1978, the communist party suffered a slight setback in the Arab localities, whereas the Labour Party registered a surprising success.

[70] It should be recalled that eight Israeli representatives voted against the Begin plan: the five communists and three supporters of the Land of Israel Movement.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Soviet Union and the PLO

Leonard Schapiro

SOVIET policy towards the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has travelled a long way since 1967 and early 1968 when it was attacked in such strong terms as "hysterical" and the like.[1] Interest in the PLO did not develop until after the Six-Day War: its operators now became "partisans." Yassir Arafat visited Moscow with Nasser in July 1968, and again alone in February 1970, but it was only after the expulsion of the Soviet advisers from Egypt in 1972 that Arafat on a further visit was given direct Soviet arms supplies: this was part of the Soviet effort to forge a progressive front of Syria, Iraq and the Palestinians.

Soviet official advocacy of a Palestinian state did not occur until the autumn of 1974. In general, the Soviet Union has since then repeatedly made it clear that what it has in mind is an independent state alongside Israel formed on the territories which were occupied by Israel in 1967: the Soviet Union has never openly supported the PLO policy of a "democratic" Arab-Jewish state (i.e. in effect the destruction of Israel), which has remained virtually unchanged over the years (in spite of occasional apparent wavering on the part of the PLO's main component Fatah)—presumably because of fear that this might involve confrontation with the United States. But it has tended to slur over this important divergence from PLO policy: thus, for example, a statement at the close of Arafat's visit to Moscow in November 1975 referred to a proposed Palestinian state "on Palestinian territory," and did not use the usual PLO formula "in the areas to be liberated" or in "all of Palestine." From the Soviet point of view support of the PLO (as will be argued below) is mainly an aspect of its overall long-term aim to polarize the Middle East into a national revolutionary "left" and a conservative pro-American "right." Equally important to the Soviet Union's short-term aims is the reconvening of the Geneva Conference, since this would give it some foothold in Middle East politics which it has been progressively losing since 1972. In view of widespread opposition to PLO participation in such a conference, and uncertainty about the US position on the question, the Soviet Union, up to the end of 1976 at all events (and, in effect, since then as well) has in its official utterances been careful to leave open options which would enable Geneva to re-open without the PLO—while in it propaganda vociferously (at all events since 1975) voicing the demand that the PLO must participate in any conference, usually using words like "participation by the Arab people of Palestine on an equal footing as represented by the PLO"—though occasionally, especially in broadcasts in Arabic, the PLO was described as "the sole"

[1] E.g. *Pravda*, 29 July 1968.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

representative. (It should be borne in mind that since there is no definite article in Russian, the frequent English translation "the representative" may sound stronger than intended by the Russian original). Side by side with the Soviet demand for participation of the PLO in the Geneva Conference has gone a determined attempt to establish it as an internationally recognized body—a PLO office was opened in the GDR in 1973 and in Moscow in 1974, and the Soviet Union successfully supported PLO efforts to be heard at and virtually recognized by the United Nations.

One of the perennial problems of the Soviet Union in dealing with the PLO has been the constant tendency within that body to fission between its main element Fatah and the many other components. (Indeed, at the time of writing, virtually open warfare has broken out between the various elements of the PLO and between the PLO and Iraqi-supported terrorists). From the outset the Soviet Union concentrated its efforts on the non-Marxist Fatah, probably regarding it as the best candidate for helping to secure, by its fashionable nationalist claims and its occasional suggestions of moderation, international recognition. But, since 1973 at least, it has also extended its support to the Marxist People's Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) led by Hawatmeh and, for a time at any rate, to the Palestine National Front, a Soviet-sponsored Marxist organization created by the Jordanian Communist party. Dr Golan lists the use of terror as one of the factors which have made Soviet relations with the PLO less than smooth over the years.[2] But in view of the terrorist activities of the PDFLP as well as of the evidence which is accumulating of Soviet involvement in Arab terrorism this judgment seems somewhat over-simplified. It is probably true to say that Soviet policy is, in general, more sympathetic to terroristic acts which can be identified as part of a liberation struggle—for example action within Arab territories now in Israeli occupation—(as distinct from hijacking an aircraft or the murder of athletes in Munich) since this is consistent with the general Soviet policy of insisting on exempting acts committed in the course of a "War of Liberation" from international definitions of "terrorism." But, as will be seen below, there are exceptions even to this distinction of principle in Soviet practice.

The year 1977 brought the Soviet Union both a major success in its Middle Eastern policy, and a major setback: the success was the joint US-Soviet declaration of 1 October in which the United States (in line with the well-known Brookings Report on the Middle East Conflict) agreed with the Soviet proposal that the Geneva Conference should be reconvened, and that the "legitimate interest" of the Palestinian Arabs

[2] Galia Golan, "The Soviet Union and the PLO," *Adelphi Papers, No.* 131, published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1977, pp. 3, 19–22. This paper provides a detailed and excellent study of Soviet-PLO relations up to the end of 1976, to which I am much indebted.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

should be safeguarded [3]—but said nothing about the participation of the PLO. This agreement with the USA signified a departure by the Soviet Union from its usual insistence, in the course of 1977, that the PLO must participate on equal terms in the Geneva Conference when it was reconvened. The agreement was followed by much diplomatic activity on all sides in preparation for the Conference. But the whole policy suffered a dramatic setback. This was the peace initiative and the Jerusalem visit by President Sadat very shortly afterwards in November. Sadat's motives for his action were immediately interpreted by the Soviet Union as dominated by his desire to counter any move which would enable the Soviet Union to regain influence over any settlement which might result in the Middle East.

Whatever misgivings the PLO may have had about Soviet intentions at Geneva, it was evidently persuaded to accept the agreement of 1 October with good grace, no doubt in the hope that it might prove to be the thin end of the wedge. Arafat at the time described it as "a genuine effort" in the right direction, while urging recognition of the PLO. Some time later he said in an interview that "in our opinion the well-known Soviet-American statement on the Middle East of October 1977 can serve as a firm foundation for a settlement." [4] But throughout 1977 and 1978 Soviet policy towards the PLO continued to show variations in the degree of enthusiasm with which it was offered support. The highlight of Soviet support for the PLO came on 7 April 1977 when Arafat on his 10th visit to Moscow since the opening of a PLO office there, was for the first time received by Brezhnev. According to a Tass statement on the meeting, Brezhnev "reaffirmed" Soviet policy that assurance of the national rights of the Arabs of Palestine was an "inseparable element" of a Middle Eastern settlement, including their right to self-determination "up to" the creation of an independent Palestinian state. Brezhnev also said that the Soviet Union is "invariably" in favour of the participation of the PLO in the Geneva Conference.[5] Arab sources apparently went further in reporting the meeting by adding that Brezhnev had said that the Soviet Union refuses to attend any conference in the Middle East if the PLO does not attend it on equal terms with all parties; and had promised to step up military aid.[6] Arafat, in turn, was lyrical in praise of the Soviet Union's support for the cause of the Palestinian Arabs and for its "economic military and other aid and support." [7] The pattern of Soviet propoganda treatment of relations with the PLO was to remain fairly constant, at any rate until the spring of 1978, when the Soviet Union (as will be seen) became increasingly concerned at the disunity of the PLO and the conflicts within it. There is constant emphasis,

[3] Text in *The New York Times*, 2 Oct. 1977.
[4] *The New York Times*, 3 Oct. 1977; *Summary of World Broadcasts*, Part I (*S.W.B.*), 4 May 1978. Cf. Interview in *The Guardian*, 3 Jan. 1978.
[5] *Le Monde*, 9 Apr. 1977.
[6] *The Times*, 9 Apr. 1977; *Le Monde*, 14 Apr. 1977.
[7] *Soviet News*, 19 Apr. 1977.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

especially but not exclusively, in broadcasts in Arabic on the PLO, usually described as the "sole" legitimate representative of the Palestinian Arabs—a phrase which is, so far as is known, never used in official Soviet statements. On the PLO side, there are repeated, fulsome references to the value and importance of Soviet aid to the Palestinian Arab cause. The United States, Israel and, of course, Egypt are repeatedly assailed for their refusal to recognise the PLO's right to represent the Palestinian Arabs. Propaganda apart, Soviet support for the PLO was reiterated on at least two important occasions. One was in reply by Brezhnev to questions put to him by a *Pravda* correspondent at the end of December 1977; but, more significantly, perhaps, since this was intended as a directive to communists and pro-communists all over the world, was a long article on the legal standing of the PLO in *New Times,* by Igor Blishchenko, who is Secretary of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, an important communist front organization. His case in support of the PLO as "the legitimate representative of the Arab people of Palestine" rests on six propositions:

(a) The PLO is officially recognized by many socialist and Asian countries, and *de facto* recognized by the Western countries which have allowed it to open information centres.

(b) The PLO is signatory to the 1949 Geneva Convention for the Protection of Victims of War and to a number of other international documents.

(c) The decision of the Rabat Conference in 1974, and the admission of the PLO to the Arab League in Cairo in 1976 as a member of equal rights.

(d) The grant of observer status by the 29th Assembly of the United Nations, and the resolution of the Assembly recognizing the Palestinian people as one of the principal parties to a just and lasting peace "in practical terms" makes PLO participation in peace negotiations "obligatory."

(e) There is no duty on the part of the PLO to recognize Israel, since Israel has not recognized the PLO.

(f) The argument that the PLO should abandon its claim of a democratic state of Arabs and Jews is invalid in view of the Zionist claims and in view of those programmes of ruling Israeli parties which "proclaim as their aim the establishment of a greater Israel extending from the Nile to the Euphrates thus threatening the existence of Arab states." [8]

And on 9 March 1978, on one of his frequent visits to Moscow, Arafat was again received by Brezhnev and assured of the Soviet Union's continued support for the PLO. Brezhnev was showered with much fulsome praise for the Soviet Union in return.

Soviet relations with the hard-line Arab states (Algeria, Libya, Syria,

[8] *New Times*, No. 4, 1978, pp. 20–21.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and Iraq) on the issue of the PLO are too complicated to be examined here. In the course of 1977 the Soviet Union was successful in securing Syrian assent to the proposal that the Geneva Conference should be reconvened, with the participation of the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian Arabs, but was unsuccessful in the case of Iraq (whose relations with the PLO were rapidly deteriorating) and of Libya. (Later in the year, however, President Assad told *The New York Times* that the Arab League could faithfully represent the Palestinian issue at a Geneva Conference).

On the other hand, consistently with its policy of keeping options open, the Soviet Union at the same time as endeavouring to assure the PLO of its unwavering support, was pursuing other possible options. Only a fortnight before Arafat's arrival in Moscow on 4 April 1977, Brezhnev had outlined, in a speech to the Soviet Trades Unions Congress, a plan for a Middle Eastern settlement in which the PLO did not figure at all. This comprised: withdrawal by Israel from all territories occupied by her; demilitarized zones policed by UN teams "possibly" including Soviet, US, British and French contingents; mutual obligations to respect each other's sovereignty, and self-determination for the Palestinian Arabs on the basis of their own state.[9] These proposals, in effect, above all including the guarantee of borders by a United Nations force, in which the Soviet Union was "willing" to participate, formed the basis of the US-Soviet statement of 1 October 1977. (In a broadcast report of this speech in Arabic, Brezhnev was nevertheless reported to have referred to the PLO as "the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian Arabs."[10]) No doubt the press rumours (presumably ultimately KGB inspired) suggesting that the Soviet Union was prepared to be flexible on the issue of PLO participation and Soviet broadcast denials that the USSR was abandoning the PLO in the course of 1977 are to be explained as part of the ambivalent policy of pursuing alternatives. Looked at from the Soviet point of view, a PLO dominated Arab state on the borders of Israel and Jordan would offer the best of prospects for the expansion of Soviet influence in the Middle East, which is, beyond doubt, the overriding Soviet objective. Even the inevitable conflicts between the discordant elements inside the PLO might, in Soviet thinking, become less acute if they could all turn their attention to the aim of conquering Israel. Moreover, the Soviet Union might well hope that if the Soviet presence in the PLO state were sufficiently massive, as it presumably would be, the USA might be deterred from intervening to save Israel. However, since the prospect of a PLO state in the face of US, Egyptian and Jordanian (to name only some), to say nothing of Israeli, opposition, may at present seem rather remote, a Soviet military presence in the Middle East in the guise of a UN contingent might offer

[9] *Keesing's Contemporary Archive*, 1977, 28383–28385.
[10] *S.W.B.*, 25 Mar. 1977.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

considerable attractions. For one thing, it would provide the KGB with a secure base for subversive operations and could enhance Soviet influence over Middle Eastern positions in other ways as well.

IT is in the general context of the ultimate Soviet aim of expanding to the maximum its influence in the Middle East that recent Soviet policy towards Marxist and left-wing elements within and outside the PLO become of particular interest. With this in mind it is useful to examine an important Soviet analytical article which appeared in October 1977 in the official *Soviet State & Law*. The author is deputy head of the Near Eastern Countries Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The main burden of this article is that the Palestine resistance movement, in the person of its true representatives, as distinct from the "prattlers and the open or camouflaged advocates for yesterday's colonizers," has become a part of the general anti-imperialist movement. The 13th session of the Palestine National Council in Cairo in March 1977 rightly laid down the aim of the Palestine movement as the setting up of "an independent national state on its own territory" and the entitlement of the PLO to take part on a basis of equality in all international discussions of the Middle East. (What the author did not point out, however, is that this resolution was repudiated by the leader of the People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Habash, the following day.) But the essentially nationalist movement of the Palestinian Arabs is acquiring, largely from the example of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, an increasingly anti-imperialist and revolutionary character—in other words (and here he quotes with approval a theoretical work of great significance by K. N. Brutents, who is one of B. N. Ponomarev's deputies in the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU). This kind of nationalist movement reaches socialism "not by class-conscious rejection of capitalism, but through anti-imperialist nationalism." (In plain English: nationalist movements, with proper direction, can be harnessed to the cause of world socialism). On the other hand the radicalization of the ranks of the Palestine Resistance movement leads sometimes to the kind of left extremism that Lenin characterized as the "infantile disease of leftism." The national-democratic nature of the Palestinian movement is the decisive factor in its drawing close to the world revolutionary movement, though it is premature as yet to talk of final victory of the national democratic element in the Palestinian movement.

The core of the problem, according to this author, is the refusal of Israel to take part in a Geneva Conference if the PLO should be present there; on the other hand the Palestinian Arabs are daily growing to realize more and more that the naural allies of their movement are the Soviet Union and the other socialist states. The ultimate outcome of the Palestinian struggle will depend on the result of the struggle going on in the Middle East between the progressive and the imperialist forces, and the extent to which the openly and covertly pro-Western

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

regimes in the Arab world can succeed in retarding revolutionary democracy. But it will also depend on what happens inside the Palestinian movement itself: it will depend on whether the progressive elements in the movement get the upper hand, or whether those elements will prevail which are ready to sacrifice the principle of the Palestinian cause for some private advantages of their own or in order to strengthen their own positions. (This sounds like a clear hint at some trends inside Fatah.) Meanwhile, the communist parties in the Arab world are careful not to act prematurely in their relations with the national movements, remembering the words of Lenin to the effect that no social revolution is conceivable without nationalist revolts and without revolutionary explosions "among part of the petty bourgeoisie . . . and without the movement of unconscious proletarians and semi-proletarians masses" against the oppression of the landlords, the Church, etc.

The article then proceeds to grade the Arab states, in favourite Soviet manner, in degree of their utility for the socialist cause. Egypt and Jordan are prepared to make a deal with Israel in order to recover the territories captured from them, as are also Tunisia and Morocco, who recognised the 1947 plan for the partition of Palestine. This is, incidentally, one of the few Soviet statements which appears to accept the Palestinian aim of the destruction of Israel: the position of Tunisia and Morocco is characterized as a compromise with the reactionaries since "it presupposes the recognition by the Arab countries of the fact of Israel's existence, as well as the necessity of concluding a durable peace treaty with Israel." The oil-producing countries, headed by Saudi Arabia, are primarily interested in oil profits and this necessarily makes them politically orientated towards the United States. They support the Palestine resistance movement financially in order to counter their radical critics, but are terrified of any further radicalization of the Palestine movement. The most "sincere" attitude to the Palestinian movement is that of Algeria, Iraq, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and Libya. The position of Syria and Lebanon is complicated by the invasion of the latter by the former. The article ends by squarely adopting Brezhnev's speech to the Trade Union Congress in March 1977—in other words with a much less than full endorsement of any exclusive rights of the PLO.[11]

The significance of this article is that it shows in a way that, so far as I know, has not been done before or since, the importance which the Soviet Union attaches in its Middle Eastern policy to traditional left-wing revolutionary elements, and above all to the ultimate polarization of the whole area into an increasingly radical, anti-imperialist movement opposed to the traditional conservative Arab states as much as to Israel. The ultimate aim is seen to be a series of uprisings, supported by the Soviet Union, which would end in the defeat of the pro-United States countries before the rising tide of revolution. These

[11] E. D. Pyrlin, "*Palestinskoe natsional'no—osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie i blizhnevostochnoe uregulirovanie*," in *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo*, No. 10, Oct. 1977.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would now include Egypt: since the November 1977 peace initiative Egypt has been repeatedly branded by the Soviet Union as in league with the United States. Whether this Soviet policy is realistic is another question—though it is the case that the Soviet Union has done quite well up to date against the West in its policy of supporting left-wing "national liberation" movements. But it is in the light of this overall policy that Soviet moves in the Middle Eastern arena should be seen. In particular, so far as the PLO is concerned, its largest component Fatah, is non-Marxist, and this may well, in spite of all the propaganda showered in its support (which is, of course, rewarded by PLO propaganda on the virtues of the Soviet Union as the Arab's best friend) affect Soviet policy towards it.

The Sadat initiative in November 1977 took both the Soviet Union and the PLO by surprise. The Soviet reaction to it was predictable—it was a capitulation to American imperialism, it was a plot concerted between Egypt, Israel and Saudi Arabia (supposed disagreements between Sadat and Begin were a put-up show). It was primarily designed to prevent the Geneva Conference from meeting and in particular to frustrate the legitimate rights of the PLO, and so forth. These charges were broadcast in Arabic from Moscow and repeated or improved on by the PLO, and the whole operation from the Soviet point of view, no doubt was, *inter alia*, intended to serve the aim of polarizing the Middle East into left and right, and cementing the unity of the left. According to Communist reports (*Morning Star* of 3 December 1977) the immediate effect was to cause disunity among the "rejectionists" in conference in Tripoli: Syria, Algeria, South Yemen, Iraq, Libya and the PLO disagreed on the issue of an eventual negotiated peace in the Middle East—a course urged by Arafat.

IN this context, it is worth glancing at Soviet relations with some of the Marxist components of the PLO and with other left-wing organizations in the Arab world. Of the three main Marxist organizations within the PLO, the Soviet attitude to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) whose leader is Habash, has never been cordial, since Habash's open criticism of Soviet peace-making on the basis of the Geneva Conference led to what was in effect a Soviet break with the PFLP in the political sphere,[12] though it is probable that clandestine links have continued in the sphere of terrorist activity. (In September 1974 the PFLP withdrew from the PLO Executive Committee, but remained in the Palestine National Council, which acts as a kind of parliament for Palestinian resistance). The Palestine National Front (PNF), created by the Jordanian Communist Party, was for some years publicized and supported by the Soviet Union. Up to 1976, at any rate, Soviet intentions seem to have been to groom the PNF, in coordination with the Moscow-orientated new Communist Party of

[12] Golan, op. cit. p. 18.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Israel (RAKAH) as a guerrilla resistance movement which would try to take over the West Bank. However, before long the Soviet Union seemed to revert to its policy of supporting the PLO on the grounds that it enjoyed the support of West Bank Arabs.[13] It may be of significance that in August 1977 the PNF was praised in a Soviet broadcast for its effort to secure recognition of the PLO as "sole legitimate representatives" of Palestinian Arabs.[14] The most cordial Soviet relations seem to have been with the People's Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) whose leader Hawatmeh, was cultivated by Moscow independently of Arafat.[15] He has paid virtually annual visits to Moscow since 1974, and is apparently used by Moscow as someone whom it looks on as capable of restoring unity in the much-riven PLO, however improbable and unrealistic such a Soviet hope may seem. His most recent visit at the head of a delegation in May and June 1978, when he was received by Ponomarev, was stated in an Arabic broadcast from Moscow to be "to investigate ways to strengthen relations between the Soviet Union and the PLO," and the need for unity was strongly emphasized in the Tass statement on the visit.[16] The visit did indeed come in the aftermath of one of the periodic revolts against Arafat in May 1978 in which the Soviet Union apparently intervened (this is discussed below).

There have also been numerous Soviet contacts with left-wing organizations outside the PLO, especially in 1978. This increased activity has presumably been due to two causes: the Sadat initiative, which made the reconvening of a Geneva Conference unlikely and therefore caused the Soviet Union to look increasingly to the other alternatives, the stepping up of revolutionary activity in the Middle East; and secondly, the increasing disunity in the PLO which made it even less attractive than hitherto as the sole hope for Soviet ambitions. Of course, in some cases these visits may well have been connected with Soviet policies relating to the particular country involved. Thus, in March 1978 a delegation of the Lebanese Communist Party was in Moscow, and in the following month Vilner of the Israeli CP (RAKAH) was received by Suslov, and in June delegates of the "Lebanese Patriotic Forces" on a visit to Moscow stressed their "fraternal unity" with the Palestine resistance movement. Around the same time support was given to the Iraqi Communist Party (21 of whose leaders had been executed by the Iraqi Baath regime in May) by reprinting long extracts from an article in the Communist Party organ. Similarly in May 1978 a Radio Forum on Palestine in Arabic included, apart from Soviet pundits like the Secretary of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, Blishchenko and the KGB-controlled Jewish pseudo-General Dragunsky, the Secretaries of pro-communist youth organizations of Lebanon,

[13] Ibid.
[14] *S.W.B.*, 20 Aug. 1977.
[15] Golan, op. cit. pp. 16–17.
[16] *Pravda*, 8 June 1978: *S.W.B.*, 3 June 1978.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Morocco and Israel. Such evidence, which could be multiplied, lends credence to the reports of Israeli observers who toured the area of the Lebanon occupied by the Israelis that "communist influence among the terrorists appears to be much stronger than their support for the Palestinian cause." [17]

The endemic disunity within the PLO has been a matter of constant concern to the Soviet Union. It has been occasionally mentioned in speeches and articles on the Soviet side, and at times admitted by Arafat who has, however, always minimized its importance. Indeed in an interview in March 1978 he stressed that unity had been established in the ranks of the Palestinians,[18] which if true, was at best very temporary. One might suppose that, in an endeavour to make the PLO more acceptable to the international community, and the USA, the Soviet Union would try to persuade it at any rate to show moderation particularly on the question of UN Security Council Resolution 242 of 22 November 1967 (which recognizes *inter alia* the right of Israel to live in peace within "secure and recognized boundaries," and restricts the Arab claim to "achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem"). There have indeed been frequent press rumours, for example, that the Soviet Union was trying to break the deadlock by introducing an amended version of Resolution 242, which would recognize the rights of the Palestinians to a state, or that the PLO would accept Resolution 242 if Israel recognized the right of the Palestinians to a national homeland. These rumours can be assumed to have emanated from the Soviet Union.[19] Arafat has blown hot and cold on the issue: at one time denying outright rumours that the PLO was ready to recognize Israel,[20] at others leading the Secretary General of the United Nations to believe that it was prepared to recognize Israel.

But, whatever ploys in the diplomatic game the Soviet Union may engage in, it seems to be the case that Soviet pressure on the PLO, and particularly on its leader Arafat, is always in the direction of greater toughness and intransigence, and not in the direction of compromise. This is, indeed, logical policy from the Soviet point of view. Firstly, because if unity is to be preserved within the Palestine resistance movement this can only be achieved by a tough policy on the part of the PLO since this is the only policy which has any hope of uniting the discordant elements within the movement; and secondly, if it is right that the Soviet Union is interested in Arab nationalism only as an aspect of furthering world socialism in the Middle East (as Pyrlin suggests) it is plain that an intransigent policy has much more chance, is indeed the only way, of achieving the kind of polarization in the area that is likely to be beneficial for the advance of communism. Negative support for the view that the Soviet Union may have doubts about placing too

[17] *The Daily Telegraph*, 23 Mar. 1978.
[18] *New Times*, No. 12, 1978, pp. 8–9.
[19] *The Financial Times*, 10 May 1977; *The Guardian*, 6 Sept. 1977.
[20] e.g. *Le Monde*, 12 May 1977.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

much of its political hopes on the PLO, as distinct from a wider revolutionary and socialist movement, is provided by the fact that the Soviet Union has made no move to encourage the PLO to set up a Palestinian government in exile—a move which the PLO obviously could not take without Soviet support and approval.

Early in April 1978, according to numerous detailed and circumstantial reports, Arafat struck at the unruly elements within his movement who were demanding more violent action and who in particular opposed Arafat's support for the observance of the cease-fire in Lebanon. About a hundred arrests were reported to have been made.[21] The matter did not end there. In the course of April, Arafat was engaging in the kind of diplomatic ambiguity which characterized him by giving press conferences which suggested (and were so interpreted) that the PLO was prepared to recognize Israel. He also said the same thing privately to senior US, British and UN officials. This provoked violent reaction from the more extremist elements in the PLO, and, reportedly, led to Soviet intervention. At all events, Arafat hastened to correct the impression that he was ready for compromise. In a speech on 27 April and in a television interview in Moscow on 29 April he now proclaimed more clearly the more familiar warlike intention to wage war to the end against the Zionist occupation of Palestine. Agreement with the PLO rebels seemed to have been reached when the Central Committee of Fatah published on 3 May a long communiqué, said to have been approved in advance by the Soviet Union, which followed the line of the extremists to the full, stressed the unity within the PLO, and called for escalation of "the military struggle inside our occupied territories, using the necessary means of struggle against the Zionist occupation." The communiqué did not restrict the intended action to the territories occupied by Israel in 1967: it rejected "the substituted homeland" (meaning clearly a state on the West Bank) and demanded repatriation and establishment of an independent state "on their national soil"—which in Arab terminology means the whole of the territory of what has become known since the British Mandate as "Palestine," Around the same time Arafat gave his usual kind of ambiguously worded interview in Beirut, which could be (and was) interpreted as a sign of willingness to recognize Israel's continued existence. Evidently he was hoping both to conciliate his extremist opponents, and to convey the impression of moderation outside the Middle East, for fear of being excluded from peace negotiations. The suggestion that the PLO might be prepared to recognize Israel, said to emanate from the PLO observer at the United Nations, was, however, denied officially.[22]

There followed feverish activity in Moscow aimed at cementing the newly-proclaimed, and presumably fragile, unity within the PLO. The

[21] E.g. *Le Monde*, 27 Apr. 1978; *The Guardian*, 24 Apr. 1978; *The Daily Telegraph*, 20 Apr. 1978.

[22] See e.g. *S.W.B.*, 4 May 1978; Israel Information Service, based on Arabic sources; *The New York Times*, 2 May 1978; *Le Monde*, 10 May 1978.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mission of Hawatmeh of the PDFLP has already been referred to, with its explicit aim, stated in the Tass report, of recognizing the "urgent necessity of consolidation and unity of action of all branches of the Palestine resistance movement within the framework of the PLO."[23] But Hawatmeh went very much further than merely acting as mediator to restore PLO unity: he, in effect, called for a much wider movement than the PLO represented, distinctly socialist in character, and since the speech was made at a meeting by the Soviet Committee for Solidarity with Afro-Asian Countries, it is obvious that the appeal was made in concert with the Soviet Union: "We call on the PLO . . . to take a series of initiatives to mobilize all the popular masses behind the plan of action opposed to . . . Zionist imperialism, Arab reactionaries and defeatists." He also demanded a "national popular democratic front" of all the "national democratic, revolutionary democratic and Communist parties" in the Middle East in a united front against "Imperialism, Zionism and right-wing Arab reaction. Further evidence that this move may represent the beginning of a shift in Soviet Middle-Eastern policy from over reliance on the PLO towards an all-out revolutionary policy, is provided by a broadcast commentry in Arabic by the most authoritative Soviet spokesman on the Middle East, Kudryavtsev. This commentary scarcely referred to the PLO, and stressed Soviet support for the national aspirations of the Palestinian Arabs. It was dated 4 May 1978—which was around the time when disunity in the PLO had reached its highest peak.[24] The PDFLP delegation was followed in July by a delegation of Fatah. An Arabic News Agency dispatch, somewhat mysteriously denied that Fatah would raise "specific Palestinian demands," but stressed that the "Palestinian cause is facing a real crisis." It was also stated that the delegation would stay 10 days, which in fact it did.[25] These events seem very emphatically to confirm the report that the Soviet Union was intervening in PLO policy, as one would expect. They suggest two inferences. First, that the Soviet Union will not tolerate conciliatory diplomatic ploys by Fatah in general and by Arafat in particular. And secondly, that Soviet support of the Palestine resistance movement extends far beyond the interests of that movement as such, which is seen by the Soviet Union merely as a part of a much wider Middle Eastern revolutionary process.

IT remains to consider briefly Soviet policy towards terrorism by the PLO. There is no possible doubt that the Soviet Union has for some time past been supplying the PLO with arms, economic aid and training in guerrilla warfare, a fact which is not denied either by the PLO or by the USSR. On the occasion when he met Brezhnev for the first time, Arafat praised Soviet "economic, military and other aid," and a

[23] *Pravda*, 8 June 1978.
[24] *S.W.B.*, 11 May 1978; 6 June 1978.
[25] *Pravda*, 5 Aug. 1978.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Moscow broadcast listed aid given by the Soviet Union as including military aid and the training of cadres in the USSR.[26] These statements apart there is ample and repeated evidence of the quantity of Soviet weapons shipped to the PLO, some of it direct, some of it via Libya, Iraq, North Korea and Eastern Europe, especially Eastern Germany. The shipments are escorted by Soviet naval vessels. Israeli sources have repeatedly confirmed that the military equipment is of great variety and highly sophisticated. There is also ample evidence of the training of guerrillas, in East Germany and elsewhere.

Quite apart from the supply of weapons, the evidence which has been accumulating in the past year or so of Soviet direct and indirect involvement in acts of terrorism makes it very difficult to sustain the view that one of the issues dividing the Soviet Union and the PLO is Soviet disapproval of acts of indiscriminate terrorism against civilians. There has, it is true, been occasional Soviet condemnation of acts of terrorism committed by various groups within the PLO in the past, but not so much in recent years. Even in the past, condemnation was selective—not extending, for example, except tentatively, to condemnation of the PDFLP in 1974 for its attack on an Israeli school, because at the time the Soviet Union was anxious to promote and support its leader Hawatmeh.[27] More recent evidence suggests that the Soviet Union, while not wishing to be openly associated with acts which shock much of world public opinion, nevertheless recognizes the value of such acts both for their part in helping to polarize the Middle East and in promoting unity within the PLO which cannot be achieved by any show of moderation. It is also fully consistent with the characteristic Soviet policy towards the PLO, in the same interest of polarization, of encouraging it in the direction of extremism rather than of diplomacy and conciliation. There are also occasions when an act of terrorism may even be encouraged by the Soviet Union as something which could assist its overall policy. This seems to have been the case of the Tel Aviv attack on 11 March 1978. This action perpetrated by Fatah's terrorist arm, "Black September," only a few days after a visit by Arafat to Moscow, must have been made known by him to the Soviet authorities in advance, if not actually coordinated with them. The attack (which was on a bus carrying civilians, including many children) was immediately, on 12 March 1978, described by Tass as an "armed clash between a detachment of Palestinian guerrillas and Israeli army units" near Tel Aviv, in which "over 30 soldiers were killed."[28] The aim of this jointly planned operation—if such it was—could have been to goad the Israelis into acts of retaliation and thus help to sabotage the Sadat peace initiative. Subsequent terrorist acts like the murder in London of the representative of the PLO or the murder in Cyprus of an Egyptian editor, were variously described by Moscow as acts of the

[26] *Soviet News*, 19 Apr. 1977 and *S.W.B.*, 30 Dec. 1977.
[27] See Golan, op. cit. pp. 20–22.
[28] *S.W.B.*, 14 Mar. 1977.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Zionists or the British—in line with PLO propaganda designed to conceal the extent of dissension within the PLO.

The evidence of Soviet involvement in the training and arming of terrorists (especially Arab terrorists) is at best circumstantial, and based almost entirely on evidence which has been leaked to press correspondents by various intelligence services. According to Western intelligence leaks, for example the leader of "Black September," Abu Jihad, has spent a great deal of time in Moscow, East Berlin, Aden and Tripoli and has recently been helping to organize training facilities and the flow of Soviet arms to Palestinian bases in Cyprus and Lebanon. According to information leaked by the French Security Service (DST) Henri Curiel, one of the founders of the Egyptian Communist Party, recently murdered in Paris, was a KGB agent employed by them to penetrate terrorist organizations, and to assist in escapes and contacts, as well as to provide the Soviet Union with information on their activities. There are many more such stories: they cannot be confirmed, but to dismiss them as imagination would be to fly in the face of what we know for a fact about much of Soviet policy. The evidence does not suggest that the Soviet Union controls or inspires the entire Arab terrorist movement: but it confirms the suspicion that it maintains, whenever possible, contacts with it, is aware of most or much of what is going on, at times encourages specific actions and, in general, does not discourage terrorism. Indeed if the argument advanced above is correct—that Arab nationalism is of subsidiary importance to the Soviet Union as compared with the spread of revolution in the Middle East—a Soviet preference for violence over diplomatic initiative, so far as the PLO is concerned, would be completely logical.

TO sum up, in the course of 1977, at any rate up to the Sadat initiative of November, the Soviet Union stepped up its support of the PLO as the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian Arabs at the Geneva Conference, which the Soviet Union was most anxious should be reconvened. At the same time, the Soviet Union was careful not to commit itself finally to support for the PLO and was prepared tentatively to explore courses which could provide it with alternatives to a PLO Palestinian state as a foothold in the Middle East—for example participation in a UN Military guarantee force. In the course of 1978 the Soviet Union, which regards support of Arab nationalism as subordinate to its ultimate aim of the expansion of revolution in the Middle East, stepped up its support of Marxist revolutionary elements both within and outside the PLO. This policy may have been influenced by the growing disunity within the PLO. But support of revolutionary organizations, and of some of their terroristic activities, offers other advantages to the Soviet Union in helping to polarize the Middle East into reactionary and revolutionary "camps," in the traditional form pursued by communist tacticians. However there are two factors which are likely to make continuing and increasing support of the PLO the pivot

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Soviet policy. One is the failure of the Soviet Union to acquire a reliable client state in the Arab world. The second is the realization that in an area where the conditions for the development and progress of Soviet-type socialism are unfavourable, the national appeal of the PLO as well as its dependence on the Soviet Union for international support, offer the best chance for the extension of Soviet influence in the Middle East. After Camp David Yassir Arafat made another visit to Moscow and had talks with Gromyko and Kosygin. It was his third official trip this year (he might have been there more often unofficially). The official communiqué published in *Pravda* referred (for the first time) to the PLO as " the sole legitimate representative " of the Palestinian people. The Iraqi-Syrian-PLO *rapprochement* and the Baghdad meeting of the Arab states against the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty have been warmly endorsed by the Soviet Union. In this perspective the role of the PLO is even more enhanced as an element of the general Soviet strategy of " destabilizing " the Middle East. Recent events in Iran have also underlined the dangers of Soviet expansion southwards.

THE WORLD TODAY

The monthly journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs provides the general reader with up-to-date and authoritative information on current world problems.

Recent issues include:

Robert McGeehan	American policies and the US–Soviet relationship
James Mayall	The battle for the Horn: Somali irredentism and international diplomacy
Raymond Hutchings	Soviet arms exports to the Third World: a pattern and its implications
William T. Tow	ANZUS: a strategic role in the Indian Ocean?
Pao-min Chang	Choices for Taiwan

Annual subscription: UK £7
(including postage) US $20 (by accelerated surface mail)
Elsewhere £9

Orders may be sent to booksellers and newsagents, or to the
Oxford University Press, Press Road, Neasden, London NW10 0DD
(Tel. 01-450 8080)

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

East Germany: Critical Voices

Werner Volkmer

WHEN several hundred young East Germans clashed with the police in East Berlin on 7 October 1977, the anniversary of the founding of the GDR, leaving several dead and many injured,[1] the alienation between the Party leadership and the population of the country appeared to be total. Young East Germans, although brought up with no personal experience of the West, apparently have serious misgivings about the course taken by their political leaders. Mere hooliganism is nothing new to East Germany, but for the first time in many years the young people opposing the authorities were now doing so for political reasons. Their message, shouted in the city centre, reverberated in the corridors of the Party headquarters: "Russians out!" and "Germany awake!"[2]

The past two years have seen a series of shocks, breakdowns and disappointments in the relationship between the Communist Party and the population at large in East Germany. The economic expectations of the proverbial man in the street, which were raised for political reasons at the beginning of the 1970s, have been frustrated. The implementation of individual human rights, such as freedom of emigration, which was regarded as inevitable after the East German government had signed the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, did not take place. Critical voices, particularly those of artists, intellectuals and skilled workers, could not be muted any longer.

Three events have marked this period of waning understanding between the government and the people of East Germany: *first*, the expulsion of the dissident singer and poet, Wolf Biermann, from East Berlin on 16 November 1976; *second*, the publication in West Germany of a series of interviews and a highly embarrassing book by a middle-ranking East German official, in which he devastatingly criticized the system in Marxist terms, and *third*, the publication in *Der Spiegel* of the manifesto of a supposedly inner-Party opposition group of middle- and high-ranking officials at the beginning of this year.

The Biermann Affair: Party Clampdown

The open letter by 13 renowned East German writers and artists,[3] in which they pleaded with the authorities to change their decision on Biermann's expulsion, was the beginning of an unprecedented wave of

[1] *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (hereafter *FAZ*), 15 Nov. 1977; the East German news agency ADN denied these reports.

[2] *The Times*, 10 Oct. 1977.

[3] Erich Arend, Jurek Becker, Volker Braun, Fritz Cremer, Franz Fühmann, Stephan Hermlin, Stefan Heym, Günter Kunert, Heiner Müller, Sarah Kirsch, Christa Wolf, Gerhard Wolf, Rolf Schneider.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

public protest. At the same time, however, troublemakers could now be easily earmarked for special treatment. The Party took severe reprisals against the less well-established intellectuals, often imprisoning them. The more famous writers were demoted from office in the Writers' Union, expelled from the Party, and their works were tacitly banned. The protest against Biermann's enforced expatriation was by no means confined to his closest colleagues.

After the initial signing of the protest letter by 12 writers and one sculptor, more than a hundred intellectuals declared their solidarity with Biermann.[4] In Jena a young clergyman was imprisoned, as were three nurses, an electronics specialist, several engineering workers and a writer, for protesting against Biermannn's expulsion.[5] In Erfurt a young stage-hand was imprisoned for collecting 50 signatures in support of Biermann.

One year after Biermann's enforced emigration at least 20 people had been put in jail and dozens of others had been forced to leave the country. Some of the emigrants feared, as Manfred Krug—a popular actor and folk singer who also had to leave—put it, that "The last man out will turn off the lights."[6] However, it would be wrong to assume that this exodus has led to a dull and dreary cultural scene in East Germany. Most important of all, the discussion of the Biermann case has continued, despite strenuous efforts by the Party to return to a quieter cultural policy. The activities of some of the 13 initial signatories of the protest letter and of some of Biermann's other supporters since November 1976 illustrate this.

THE well-established East German lyricist and writer, Bernd Jentzsch, who happened to be in Switzerland during November 1976, wrote an open letter to Erich Honecker after the Biermann furore, describing the atmosphere of growing repression in cultural life in the GDR. Jentzsch explained why he thought it his duty to demand publicly that cultural policies be reversed. He referred to searches of writers' flats by the secret police, followed by interrogations lasting for hours. He accused the secret police of confiscating unpublished manuscripts, notes and diaries, letters and books. Jentzsch also complained that more and more good manuscripts were being rejected by publishers, while the ramblings of Party hacks were accepted. These events, he wrote, which had occurred "frighteningly often" prior to his departure in October 1976 made the Party slogan about the "blossoming of the arts" seem like pure derision.[7] Jentzsch, who was on a working visit to Switzerland, decided to stay there. His writings, however, are not banned in the GDR.[8]

[4] *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 23 Nov. 1976.
[5] *FAZ*, 19 Jan. 1977.
[6] *International Herald Tribune*, 18 Aug. 1977.
[7] *FAZ*, 24 Nov. 1976.
[8] *FAZ*, 16 Mar. 1977, where it is reported that a second edition of some of his short stories even appeared after his open letter and his emigration, although the authorities could have easily stopped their publication.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The sculptor Fritz Cremer was put under heavy pressure by the authorities to withdraw his signature. Cremer's son-in-law, Peter Schwarzbach, had been imprisoned for signing the protest letter himself. Cremer was told that Schwarzbach would be freed if Cremer withdrew his signature, which he did. Schwarzbach was released.[9] Cremer's daughter Trini, however, was so disgusted with the whole affair that she has now signed the letter herself.

Volker Braun did not withdraw his signature, but expressed reservations. A few days after the affair, Braun claimed publicly that the open letter was being used by Western commentators to create a rift between the signatories and the Party.[10] However, Rolf Schneider indicates in a short story about the Biermann protest that Braun had been the one who had looked up the address of the news agency in West Berlin to which the protest letter was to be sent.[11] The authorities, however, apparently know that Braun changes his mind easily if put under pressure. He was reprimanded by the Party for his part in the affair, while others were more severely censured.[12]

The most vulnerable of the remaining 11 writers, the Party must have thought, was Sarah Kirsch. She ranks among the best contemporary lyricists in Germany and has won several literary prizes in both Eastern Europe and the West, among them, the Italian Petrarca Prize. She had been treated with suspicion by hardline officials for some time. After she signed the protest letter, her name was struck off the list of Party members. Sarah Kirsch continued to speak her mind. During the summer of 1977 she was subjected to personal abuse and rumours. Threatening slogans were written on the door of her flat in East Berlin, and she was finally told that an application to leave the country would be treated favourably. She left the GDR and now lives in West Berlin. Her enforced emigration was seen by one intellectual in the GDR as the result of the politicking of one of the other 10 initial signatories of the protest letter.[13]

Günter Kunert, who is also a fine poet, still lives in East Berlin. In July and August 1977 he was involved in an exchange of open letters with another East German writer, Joachim Seyppel, in which they discussed the pros and cons of the emigration of East German intellectuals.[14] The exchange took place in West German newspapers, however. The reason for this, as Kunert pointed out, was that "our problems cannot be dealt with where we work." The East Berlin Writers' Union, he complained, was no place for discussion because "they shut you up

9 *FAZ*, 22 Nov. 1976.
10 *Neues Deutschland*, 26 Nov. 1976.
11 *FAZ*, 16 July 1977, supplement.
12 Jurek Becker, Sarah Kirsch and Gerhard Wolf were expelled from the Party. Stephan Hermlin was severely censured. Expulsion procedures were started against Christa Wolf and Günter Kunert. Jurek Becker, Volker Braun, Günter de Bruyn, Sarah Kirsch, Ulrich Plenzdorf and Dieter Schubert lost their seats in the presidium of the Berlin section of the Writers' Union. *FAZ*, 22 Dec. 1976.
13 *Tagesspiegel*, 22 Aug. 1977.
14 Seyppel in *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 26 July 1977; Kunert in *Die Zeit*, 5 Aug. 1977.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

before you even open your mouth—as if you were a fool or a mindless child." This open discussion is not without delicacy as Seyppel moved from West Berlin to East Germany only four years ago and is already encountering serious problems with the authorities, while Kunert is potentially another emigrant, should the Party so decide.

In some cases the East German authorities have pursued a special strategy of preparing the ground before getting an undesirable though famous, intellectual out of the way. Manfred Krug, a leading actor in East Germany, was subjected to such treatment following his support for Biermann. Vicious rumours and lack of work forced him either to give in or apply for an exit visa. Rather than kiss the rod and maintain his privileged position, he opted out and went to the West.[15]

Krug had played the lead in a film written by Jurek Becker, one of the initial signatories, and a prominent East German writer. The film has been finished, but not released. Becker was born in Poland and spent part of his youth in a Jewish ghetto and in Nazi concentration camps. He came to fame after his novel *Jakob der Lügner* was published in 1968. The story of how to survive under deadly conditions without losing your sense of humour is partly autobiographical. Until recently, Becker was in a similar position to Manfred Krug before he applied for his exit visa.[16]

Becker is a convinced socialist who does not want to leave East Germany, though neither does he want to keep quiet. In an interview with a West German news magazine, he said: "My identity has changed in some way during the last seven or eight months. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that I am now 39 and suddenly feel the fear that I will still be behaving tactically when I am 60—in favour of something which will not even exist then." Becker therefore believes he must criticize openly now. "If it is a question of keeping my mouth shut, then I would rather keep my mouth shut in the Bahamas."[17] Becker received permission to live in West Germany for a year, but can return to East Germany should he want to. He and other outspoken intellectuals in East Germany want to demonstrate their critical solidarity with the Party and shun uncritical complicity.

DESPITE elaborate attempts by the authorities to ease the tension before the eighth writers' congress in May 1978, the dissenting writers were not silenced entirely. Rather unexpectedly, the problems which many intellectuals have with the Party were not only brought up at the congress, but these intellectuals were even defended. Yet more surprisingly, part of Stephan Hermlin's speech, a highly critical contribution to the congress discussions, was published in the official Party daily, *Neues Deutschland*. Hermlin objected to the idea that writers in East Germany should regard themselves as a team, and

[15] *Der Spiegel*, 18 July 1977, p. 132.
[16] Sarah Kirsch had the same experience as Manfred Krug.
[17] *Der Spiegel*, 18 July 1977, p. 128 ff.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pointed out that writers are not the kind of people who can be expected to cooperate in that way. He also suggested that German literature encompasses works from Switzerland and Austria as well as from East and West Germany; not two, but four countries contribute to German culture.[18] The newly-elected president of the Writers' Union, Hermann Kant, an author with an impeccable Party record, offered the dissenting members "friendly cooperation": "We have offered them our hand. The question now is whether it will be taken."[19]

Of the 12 writers who initially signed the letter of protest against the expulsion of Wolf Biermann, only two—Volker Braun and Stephan Hermlin—took part in the congress. Sarah Kirsch and Jurek Becker now live in West Germany, and the others were not sent as delegates by their district sections (at the instigation of the leadership of the Writers' Union) or deliberately left for visits abroad, ignoring the congress. Two writers—Karl-Heinz Jakobs and Günter de Bruyn—were chosen as delegates, but withdrew, saying that they did not want to take part in an unrepresentative congress.[20] The playright Helmut Baierl, a well-known Party hack, coined a phrase to explain the absence of such writers: "It is simply easier to foul your nest than to defend it."[21]

The seventh writers' congress in 1973 was a relatively relaxed and encouraging event for those who do not slavishly follow the Party line regardless of the cost to their artistic conscience. At that time, a photograph of the Party leader, Erich Honecker, talking with Ulrich Plenzdorf, a dissenting playright, appeared in *Neues Deutschland* (albeit only in the limited circulation of East Berlin).

The hard line taken against writers during the last two years seems to have caused fears in some Party circles that things have gone too far. The authorities are apparently trying to prevent further damage by offering a more conciliatory approach in order to encourage cooperation. The result so far has been an uneasy truce which could break into open conflict at any moment.

Rudolf Bahro

The most surprising and perhaps the most skilled attack on the Party and its system in the 1970s has come from an entirely unknown man, a former trade union official, journalist and economist. Rudolf Bahro, born in 1935, applied to join the Party in 1952 and enjoyed a copy-book career until he fell foul of the Party in the mid-1960s. After studying philosophy in Berlin, Bahro worked as a journalist and was then asked to join the bureau of a trade union as an assistant. He returned to journalism in 1965 and became deputy editor of the students' weekly,

[18] *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, 31 May 1978.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Karl Woermann, "Zum Schriftstellerkongress in Ost-Berlin", Aspects, BBC German Service, 25 May 1978.
[21] *Berliner Stimme*, 13 May 1978.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Forum, but had to leave after starting a literary discussion in the paper and after printing the controversial play *Kipper Paul Bauch* by Volker Braun. With the help of friends, he then went into industry and became a director responsible for labour organization, rationalization and fulfilment of norms in a Berlin rubber company.

On 22 August 1977 *Der Spiegel,* the Hamburg news magazine, published an excerpt from a book which Bahro had written: *Die Alternative.*[22] As the subtitle says, it is a critique of socialism as it actually exists. Bahro analyses the development of the existing form of socialism in the Soviet Union from historical and philosophical perspectives, pointing out where and why it has differed from the ideas of Marx. He then gives a devastating analysis of the system in the GDR, an analysis which he believes is applicable to all Eastern bloc countries. The Party apparatus and the state bureaucracy are the focus of much of the criticism. Bahro then describes a possible way to a better society in the GDR. This would involve an institutionalized extra-Party opposition. Bahro calls this opposition a "new federation of communists" or, figuratively speaking, a "collective intellectual."[23]

The surprise effect of the book was considerable. Until August 1977 nobody knew who Bahro was or what he had to say. The publication of parts of his book in *Der Spiegel,* interviews on both West German television networks and West German radio, the distribution of *samizdat* versions of his book and the publication of the book itself in West Germany (a few hundred copies of which are finding their way into East Germany), has all ensured that Bahro's views are being circulated in East Germany. Whatever the Party's treatment of him, Party officials cannot avoid being confronted with his criticisms. Bahro said: "I have written a book against which the political police will be powerless because it hits the Party apparatus in its heart."[24] Bahro was taken into custody one day after the publication of one of the chapters of his book in *Der Spiegel.*

Bahro believes that a thinking process has started in the GDR, set in motion by the march of Eastern bloc troops into Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Like so many of his fellow countrymen, Bahro thought initially of resigning from the Party in protest. However, he decided to do something more constructive, and started writing his book. Although the concept he develops is Utopian, his sharp analysis and high standard of thought in the first two parts of the book make *Die Alternative* one of the best intellectual attempts at a critical assessment of the existing system ever to emerge from the GDR.

In contrast to the Party, of course, and unlike Harich, Bahro rejects authoritarian rule and refers to Marx's analysis of the Paris Commune in support of his thesis. Like Marx, he sees the state as a societal parasite.

[22] *Die Alternative—Zur Kritik des real existierenden Sozialismus* (Europäische Verlagsanstalt, Cologne/Frankfurt, 1977).
[23] Ibid., p. 16.
[24] *Der Spiegel,* 22 Aug. 1977, p. 31.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For him, as for Harich, Stalinism was unavoidable under the specific circumstances in Soviet Russia. However, he holds that the general emancipation of man has become more urgent. Bahro suggests that in future society freedom should have priority over necessity. This, he believes, can be achieved by adhering to the federal principle of social organization which is embodied in the idea of free association. Bahro advocates that the exercise by the individual of the right of free association should replace his subordination to the state.

THE Party took three and half months to answer publicly to any of Bahro's arguments. In a speech to cultural officials in Schwerin, Professor Hans Koch of the Social Science Institute of the Central Committee called Bahro an anti-communist because his critique had shown impatience, weakness and defeatism. It was a non-dialectic negation of existing socialism.[25] Koch's reply made it clear that the Party regards it as one thing to criticize the existing system, but an entirely different thing to suggest that the system should be replaced by another one.

The East German Party hierarchy could not accept Bahro's ideas because it felt that he had called the Party's authority into question. Bahro wants free discussion and an end to the principle of democratic centralism: in his words, an end to subordination. While Harich, after 10 years' imprisonment, became a pessimistic thinker, admiring Arnold Gehlen and seeing no future for a society without authoritarian power structures, Bahro, in his effort to have his optimistic and Utopian views discussed in East Germany, put himself into a position where he risked long-term imprisonment, and on 30 June 1978 he was duly sentenced to eight years for "spying activities." The greatest embarrassment to the authorities, however, was that Bahro refused to apply for emigration to West Germany in exchange for having his prison sentence waived.

Inner-Party Opposition

The publication at the beginning of 1978 of a manifesto purportedly drawn up by the "League of Democratic Communists of Germany," shows that Bahro's idea of an inner-Party opposition in the GDR is taken seriously in certain quarters.[26] The document's main concerns are with the re-establishment of a pluralist democracy in the East and with the reunification of Germany. Damning attacks on the Soviet Union and the corrupt and inefficient system in East Germany are the other main thrusts of the manifesto.

It might have been expected that an East German opposition would make the reunification of Germany the central theme of its policy declaration. As the document states, power struggles within the East German Communist Party's politburo have been closely connected with all-German questions. The authors name former members of the polit-

[25] P. Pragal, "SED antwortet auf Bahros Thesen," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 4 Dec. 1977.
[26] *Der Spiegel*, 2 Jan. 1978, pp. 21–24 and 9 Jan. 1978, pp. 26–30.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

buro who have been purged—Ackermann, Zaisser, Herrnstadt, Oelssner, Schirdewan—and the former Party leader Ulbricht, who was ousted by Honecker, as having been involved in such struggles. The far-reaching implications of German reunification have even led the authors to outline the future shape of Europe.

The group behind the manifesto has also gone to some trouble to raise the hackles of the Soviet leadership by asserting that more people have been killed by Soviet "barbarity" than by Hitler's Third Reich and the war. The manifesto condemns the Soviet Union's armament deliveries to the Third World as warmongering. The choice of words suggests that the group does not have much communist solidarity left. They call the Soviet leaders "Red Popes" and "neo-fascists," and the members of the East German Party's politburo, "polit quislings." Communist leaders generally are referred to as "red-lacquered Nazis."

The emergence of a high-ranking dissident group of democratic communists in East Germany is in many ways surprising. It is the only Eurocommunist inner-party opposition in Eastern Europe which has come out into the open as yet, albeit only through an anonymous manifesto outlining its aims for general discussion. Moreover, this group adopts the clandestine techniques which Lenin taught the Bolsheviks in order to survive.

THE abusive language used against the USSR, the extensive treatment of German reunification, and the personal attacks on the Party leader Erich Honecker for his self-indulgence and corruption, makes it clear that one of the effects of the document will inevitably be to increase the concern of the Soviet leaders about the political course of East Germany. The *rapprochement* between the two Germanies, which was to a certain degree imposed on the East German leadership by the USSR at the beginning of *détente* policy in the early 1970s, will be carefully watched by Moscow.

Politicians in both East and West Germany are aware of the disruptive implications of the manifesto for inner-German relations. The East German news agency ADN swiftly disclaimed the existence of such a clandestine inner-Party opposition and accused the West German secret service of having played a bad New Year's Eve joke on the GDR. *Der Spiegel,* however, would not have lent its pages if that had been the purpose. The West German government also showed signs of embarrassment and stated that it knew nothing of such an opposition. The Minister responsible for inner-German relations, Egon Franke, said in a radio interview that he did not believe in the authenticity of the manifesto. Talks between the Secretary of State in the Federal Chancellery, Hans-Jürgen Wischnewski, and the East German representative in Bonn, Herr Kohl, and further discussions by Wischnewski in East Berlin were intended to help in mending fences.[27] Several West German publications

[27] *FAZ*, 23 Jan. 1978.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had received a document similar to the manifesto, but by different authors, as early as September 1977. This document, however, was not published for political reasons. When *Der Spiegel* received a third such document in January 1978, little attention was paid to it.[28] Both the East and the West German authorities attempted to play down the emergence of an inner-Party opposition in East Germany, from fear of Soviet interference. Of the leading SPD politicians, only Egon Bahr expressed publicly the view that the manifesto published in *Der Spiegel* was genuine. From Bonn's point of view, the manifesto could hamper further agreements with the GDR on, for example, the building of a motorway between Berlin and Hamburg through East Germany, or on trade arrangements. East Berlin, on its part, did not want to see its freedom to manoeuvre further curtailed by Soviet reaction to too close a rapport between East and West Germans, and to too liberal an internal policy in the GDR.

The East German Communist Party, with roughly two million members, that is more than 10 per cent of the total population of 17 million, has become a fairly heterogeneous organization, where social democratic and democratic communist ideas can easily appear. After the publication of the manifesto the Party leadership will have to be extremely careful to eradicate such elements. Whoever the authors of the document may be, which is not an entirely irrelevant question, the consequences of the manifesto are severe. The reason for this is that the criticisms and statements in the document reflect widespread thinking in East Germany. The former dissident philosopher Wolfgang Harich, who, after a 10-year prison sentence which he served in the 1950s and 1960s, has become something of a Stalinist critic of the regime, suggested that the authors of the manifesto were people like Wolf Biermann.[29] Biermann himself denied these allegations, but made the important point that there was a core of truth in Harich's comment, in so far as in his poems and songs Biermann expresses the feelings and thoughts of the average East German citizen.[30]

Orthodoxy versus Flexibility

The League's demands for a pluralist democracy and adherence to human rights are in line with the ideas of Robert Havemann and Rudolf Bahro, the two most prominent dissident thinkers in East Germany to date. In contrast to the League, however, both denounce the class character of the Western parliamentary system and of capitalism. Although they are also very critical of the Soviet Union, Bahro at least has made it clear that change in East Germany, in his view, cannot be achieved by antagonizing Moscow.

Party politicians in the GDR, even if they aim for very modest

[28] *DDR: Das Manifest der Opposition—Eine Dokumentation* (Goldmann Taschenbuch, Munich, 1978), pp. 39–46.
[29] BBC External Services, despatch by Eddy Vickers from Berlin, 12 Jan. 1978.
[30] Ibid.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

changes, have to take this into account and are aware of the overriding influence of Moscow in matters of principle. There have always been hardliners like Abusch and Hager in the cultural field, and Mielke and Hoffman, who are worried about the security aspects. Despite attempts under Honecker's leadership to react more pragmatically and flexibly towards the tensions arising internally, by reputation and personal record, Honecker cannot be regarded as a liberal thinking politician. He led the clampdown on writers and artists in 1965, and his biographer, Heinz Lippmann, thinks that if it came to a show-down, Honecker would be among the hardliners. His Party discipline appears to be unqualified.[31]

The problems confronting the East German leadership make it very unlikely that the Party elite and the population can establish, in the short or medium term, an understanding similar to that which existed at the beginning of the 1970s. Sharply rising prices for raw materials and a deterioration in the terms of trade between the GDR and the USSR have required greater efforts in production, without the Party being able to provide adequate rewards. Wages of East German workers have risen faster than the supply of consumer goods. In 1977 private savings stood at a record level of 80,000 million marks.

The reluctance of workers to respond readily to yet another call for increased production, voluntary shift work and rationalization points to further clashes between workers and the Party. Strikes in the Fritz-Heckert-Werke in Karl Marx-Stadt,[32] the Narva-Werke in East Berlin,[33] and demands for payment in hard currency for workers who are employed in export production for the West, which were made in the Bergmann-Borsig-Werke near East Berlin,[34] indicate the scope of the difficulties with which the Party is faced.

The degree of distrust between the Party leadership and the population is reflected not only in the number of applications for legal emigration to West Germany, which at the beginning of 1977 was estimated as anywhere between 100,000 and 200,000, but also in the nervous reactions of the Party. The campaign for ideological vigilance, which the Party has started, will hardly improve this situation. Interference with traffic on the transit routes to West Berlin point in the same direction. If the Party leaders should want to return to the more flexible approach of the early 1970s, it is difficult to see where the strait-jacket of orthodox ideology has left them with enough room for such manoeuvre.

[31] H. Lippmann, *Honecker—Porträt eines Nachfolgers* (Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, Cologne, 1971), p. 233.
[32] *Der Tagesspiegel*, 13 Nov. 1977.
[33] *FAZ*, 23 Jan. 1978.
[34] *FAZ*, 28 Sept. 1977.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ignazio Silone 1900-1978

ANOTHER friend has died whose life and work has illuminated our epoch, helped us to understand better its grim aspects, and left a legacy for a younger generation to continue the struggle for cultural freedom. Silone's thought was one of the influences which led to the establishment of *Survey* and other magazines sharing his attitude.

An early anti-fascist (in the real sense of the term), he was one of the first Western anti-Stalinists (he left the Italian Communist Party in 1930), and he remained critical of communism till the end. He accepted the sincerity of some, though by no means all, Italian Eurocommunists, but he firmly rejected the idea of the "historic compromise" with the Communist Party.

His outlook has been seminal and his books, from *Fontamara* to *The Adventures of a Humble Christian,* from *The School for Dictators* to *Emergency Exit,* will remain an inspiration.

Until the end of 1968 Silone edited with Nicola Chiaromonte the magazine *Tempo Presente* which provided the much-needed libertarian fare in post-fascist Italy. Silone was one of the first to understand the need to extend the struggle against fascism to a general opposition to all forms of totalitarian oppression.

Ironically, he was more influential abroad than in his own country, and literary recognition came to him first through translations. It may be the next generation which will fully appreciate his stature.

I recollect my last visit to his apartment in Rome. I went to see him with an Italian friend and some Polish dissidents. He was already very weak: time and illness had taken their toll. Yet he was interested in the struggle of East European dissidents and was moved to tears when his visitors spontaneously sang for him the Polish counterpart of "For he's a jolly good fellow". I remember a remark by one of them, addressing his friend (both were scions of prominent Polish communists) with the words: "I particularly respect Silone because, while our fathers were licking Stalin's boots, he had the guts to stand up to both Hitler and Stalin!"

Whenever there was a need to take action on behalf of persecuted intellectuals, of all those suffering for *delit d'opinion,* Silone, in his unassuming way, was always ready to help, be it through the Congress (later Association) for Cultural Freedom, through PEN International, or simply in a personal capacity. I recollect his efforts to help Hungarian writers after 1956, his action on behalf of Sinyavsky and Daniel, and similar expressions of concern and solidarity.

The Italian president summed it all up:

> "With the death of Ignazio Silone disappears one of the most representative contemporary figures in the struggle for freedom, democracy and social justice."

L.L.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Our Contributors

RAYMOND ARON is a Professor at the Collège de France and the author of *Century of Total War, Espoir et Peur du Siècle, Opium of the Intellectuals, Paix et Guerre entre les Nations, Le Grand Débat* and *La République Impériale.* He has recently published a book on Clausewitz.

MAURICE CRANSTON, a Professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science, has been seconded to the European University Institute in Florence, Italy, where he is Professor of Political Science.

ALAIN GREILSAMMER is a Doctor of Political Science of the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques in Paris. He is at present Senior Lecturer at Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, Israel. His book *Les Communistes Israéliens* was published in April 1978 by the Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques.

MICHAEL HELLER is Maître-Assistant at the Sorbonne. He is the author of *Le Monde Concentrationnaire et la Littérature Soviétique* and other works. He has contributed numerous reviews to *Survey.*

LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI is a fellow of All Souls College, Oxford. He was Professor of the History of Philosophy at the University of Warsaw until 1968, and is the author of numerous works in Polish including a book on Spinoza, *The Individual and Infinity.* His books published in the West include *Mensch Ohne Alternative, Les Chrétiens sans Eglise, The Positivist Philosophy* and *Marxism and Beyond.* His book *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Rise, Growth and Dissolution* will be published by Oxford University Press.

VICTOR NEKRASOV was born in Kiev in 1911. He was involved in the theatre from 1937–41, took part in the war (1941–44), and worked as a journalist from 1944–47. His highly acclaimed novel *In the Trenches of Stalingrad* was published in 1946. *Native Town, Kira Georgievna, First Acquaintance, On both Sides of the Ocean* and *A Month in France* were also published in the Soviet Union. He has lived in Paris since 1974.

PATRICK O'BRIEN is Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of Western Australia and author of *The Saviours—An Intellectual History of the Left in Australia.*

EBERHARD REISSNER, formerly Professor of Russian Literature at the Humboldt University, Berlin, is now Director of the Institute for Slavonic Studies at the University of Mainz.

LEONARD SCHAPIRO is Professor Emeritus of Political Science (with special reference to Russian Studies) at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He is a Fellow of the British Academy, and the author of, *inter alia, The Origin of the Communist Autocracy, The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* and *Totalitarianism.*

DOMENICO SETTEMBRINI is Professor of the History of the Labour Movement at the University of Pisa. He is the author of *La Chesa nella politica italiana, Due ipotesi per il socialismo in Marx ed Engels, Socialismo e rivoluzione dopo Marx* and *Il labirinto Marxista.*

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BORIS SOUVARINE was born in 1895. A French Socialist during the First World War, he was Paris correspondent of *Novaya Zhizn'* (a daily paper published by Maxim Gorky in Petrograd), a founder-member of the French Communist Party, and a secretary of the Third International, from which he was later expelled for "indiscipline." He was subsequently corresponding member in Paris of the Marx-Engels Institute of Moscow. Expelled from this Institute, he became a corresponding member of the Amsterdam Institute of Social History. He has contributed to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*. He was founder and editor of *La Critique Sociale* and *Le Contrat Social*.

GEORGE URBAN is a writer on contemporary history, who lives in England. He was a Senior Research Associate at the University of Southern California and a Research Fellow at Indiana University, Bloomington, and is now Academic Consultant to Radio Free Europe. He is the editor and co-author of *Can we Survive Our Future?* (1972), *Toynbee on Toynbee* (1974), *Détente* (1976), *Hazards of Learning* (1977) and *Eurocommunism* (1978).

WERNER VOLKMER was born and brought up in East Berlin, and studied in West Berlin. Since 1971 he has worked for the External Services of the BBC in London, specializing in East German Affairs.

ALEXANDER ZINOVIEV: See "Autobiography", pp. 1–11.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hofstra and Adelphi Universities

announce

THE TROTSKY-STALIN CONFLICT AND RUSSIA IN THE 1920's

A Conference Marking the Centennial of Their Births 1879–1979

FRIDAY, MARCH 9 and SATURDAY, MARCH 10, 1979

PANELS

I Political Struggle

II Theory and Ideology

III Economics

IV Literature and Art

V Biography and Psychohistory

Sponsored by:

Hofstra University, Hempstead, N.Y. Adelphi University, Garden City, N.Y.

Long Island Seminar on the Russian Revolution

Registration: $10.00 $5.00 (students)

For Information:

UCCIS – University Center for Cultural & Intercultural Studies
Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York 11550

UCCIS Office – 516-560-3296

History Office (Hofstra U) 516-560-3229

History Office (Adelphi U) 516-294-8700 x 7281

Conference Coordinators:

Dr. George D. Jackson, Hofstra University

Dr. Robert Devlin, Adelphi University

Dr. Russell Snow, Hofstra University

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE CHINA QUARTERLY

The leading international journal for the study of twentieth century China

Issues contain
Articles Book Reviews Comments
Research Notes Visitors' Reports from China
Quarterly Chronicle and Documentation

Issue No. 75 (September 1978)

PERFORMANCE AND THE CHINESE POLITICAL SYSTEM: A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH POLICIES — *David M. Lampton*

HUA KUO-FENG AND THE ARREST OF THE "GANG OF FOUR" — *Andres D. Onate*

MAO AND LIU IN THE 1947 LAND REFORM: ALLIES OR DISPUTANTS? — *Tanaka Kyoko*

THE CHINESE REVOLUTION AND THE COLONIAL AREAS: THE VIEW FROM YENAN, 1937–41 — *Steven M. Goldstein*

Research Notes

SOME SPECULATIONS ON THE RETURN OF THE REGIONS: PARALLELS WITH THE PAST — *Dorothy J. Solinger*

CHINA'S DEMOGRAPHIC EVOLUTION 1850–1953 RECONSIDERED — *Peter Schran*

DAVID MARSHALL AND JEWISH EMIGRATION FROM CHINA — *Josef and Lynn Silverstein*

Review Article

MODERN CHINESE STUDIES IN JAPAN AND THE WEST: COMING CLOSER TOGETHER — *Ronald Suleski*

Editorial Office:
School of Oriental and African Studies
Malet Street, London WC1E 7HP

For subscriptions write to:
Publications (*The China Quarterly*)
School of Oriental and African Studies
Malet Street, London WC1E 7HP

Subscription rates:
£10 or U.S.$20 a year, post free
Full-time students £5 or U.S.$10
Individual copies £2.50 or U.S.$5

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

VOICES ON SURVEY

"*Survey* plays an important role in analyzing the wide range of issues in the USSR and Eastern Europe and such analyses are becoming increasingly important as the situation in the East becomes more unstable. I think that *Survey* always aims to be sober in its approach to problems, contrary to many Western publications which indulge in wishful thinking."

Andrei Amalrik.

"Over the years *Survey* has been extraordinarily good at spotting new trends in international thought and politics long before the world at large has become aware of these trends. Its range of themes is wide but it is at its best when it devotes a whole issue or a series of issues to one subject—such as east-west *détente*, revolution and culture, or post-industrial society. Those special issues are treasured by *Survey* readers for a long time."

Brian Beedham, Foreign Affairs Editor, *The Economist.*

"I have read and kept every issue of *Survey* since its inception in 1955. *Survey* is indispensable for its articles on the Soviet Union and the ideological currents of the world today."

Daniel Bell, Harvard University.

"*Survey* has no rivals in its field. It is an indispensable journal."

Saul Bellow, Nobel Prize for Literature. Chicago.

"Such contributions as I have read in *Survey* have seemed to me interesting, original and informative."

Isaiah Berlin, Oxford.

"*Survey* is a magazine which has supported the cause of human rights in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe since its inception, i.e. for almost a quarter of a century. It published documents on my trial as well as my own writings while I was still in the Soviet Union, in and out of prison. It regularly prints the most important *samizdat* documents. . . ."

Vladimir Bukovsky.

"*Survey* is unique among periodicals dealing with world affairs in the thoughtfulness, the informativeness and the readability of its contents."

Robert Conquest, Hoover Institution.

"*Survey* is one of the remarkable publications of our day. It combines an open mind for subjects of public interest with high academic standards. It manages to refrain from becoming a campaigning journal while at the same time leaving no doubt in the reader's mind about the commitment of the editor and his authors; it enriches the world by providing information which is otherwise not available; it contributes to the study of relations between communist and non-communist countries."

Ralf Dahrendorf, Director, London School of Economics.

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

VOICES ON SURVEY

"*Survey* is a journal with a tremendous record of accomplishment."
Lewis Feuer, University of Virginia.

"I do not see how it is possible for anyone to pretend to follow current international affairs without reading *Survey* regularly."
Irving Kristol, Editor, *The Public Interest.*

"*Survey* has two purposes. One is to increase understanding of the subject it covers—not to preach, to crusade or to polemicize, but to make us understand. The other aim . . . is to expose, in careful, reasoned and documented studies, the practice of committing crimes in the name of ideology."
Bernard Levin, *The Times.*

"*Survey* is the most outstanding journal dealing with Eastern Europe and revolutionary change. It has been of interest both to specialists and to those interested in political change for over two decades. It deserves to be read widely."
Seymour Martin Lipset, Stanford University.

"*Survey* has established itself as the foremost journal in the field of East-West studies. It is a rare combination, both learned and sensible."
Daniel P. Moynihan, United States Senator.

"*Survey* has always been indispensable, but at a time when illusions about the nature of the Communist world are once again rampant, it is perhaps more necessary than ever before."
Norman Podhoretz, Editor, *Commentary.*

"*Survey* is admirable both for its intellectual quality and its moral fervour."
Eugene V. Rostow, Yale University.

"No serious student of Soviet Affairs can exist without *Survey*. For many years it has been the foremost medium of serious study of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; it is impossible to imagine doing without it."
Harrison E. Salisbury, *The New York Times.*

"The excellence of *Survey* is well established. Those concerned with Communist and East European affairs find it to be scholarly and reliable, often more informative than any other journal and above all always reliable."
Leonard Schapiro, London School of Economics.

"Many publications are useful to persons writing on public affairs. A few publications, like *Survey* are indispensable. It is among the best sources of information and analyses about the things that matter most to the West."
George F. Will, Columnist and Press & TV Commentator.

Printed in Great Britain by The Eastern Press Ltd., London and Reading

PRODUCED 2004 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED